

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

MISS HALCOMBE'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

JULY 1st.—The confusion of their arrival has had time to subside. Two days have elapsed since the return of the travellers; and that interval has sufficed to put the new machinery of our lives at Blackwater Park in fair working order. I may now return to my journal, with some little chance of being able to continue the entries in it as collectedly as usual.

I think I must begin by putting down an odd remark, which has suggested itself to me since Laura came back.

When two members of a family, or two intimate friends, are separated, and one goes abroad and one remains at home, the return of the relative or friend who has been travelling, always seems to place the relative or friend who has been staying at home at a painful disadvantage, when the two first meet. The sudden encounter of the new thoughts and new habits eagerly gained in the one case, with the old thoughts and old habits passively preserved in the other, seems, at first, to part the sympathies of the most loving relatives and the fondest friends, and to set a sudden strangeness, unexpected by both and uncontrollable by both, between them on either side. After the first happiness of my meeting with Laura was over, after we had sat down together, hand in hand, to recover breath enough and calmness enough to talk, I felt this strangeness instantly, and I could see that she felt it too. It has partially worn away, now that we have fallen back into most of our old habits; and it will probably disappear before long. But it has certainly had an influence over the first impressions that I have formed of her, now that we are living together again—for which reason only I have thought fit to mention it here.

She has found me unaltered; but I have found her changed.

Changed in person, and, in one respect, changed in character. I cannot absolutely say that she is less beautiful than she used to be: I can only say that she is less beautiful to me. Others, who do not look at her with my eyes and my recollections, would probably think her improved. There is more colour, and more decision and roundness of outline in her face than

there used to be; and her figure seems more firmly set, and more sure and easy in all its movements than it was in her maiden days. But I miss something when I look at her—something that once belonged to the happy, innocent life of Laura Fairlie, and that I cannot find in Lady Glyde. There was, in the old times, a freshness, a softness, an ever-varying and yet ever-remaining tenderness of beauty in her face, the charm of which it is not possible to express in words—or, as poor Hartright used often to say, in painting, either. This is gone. I thought I saw the faint reflexion of it, for a moment, when she turned pale under the agitation of our sudden meeting, on the evening of her return; but it has never reappeared since. None of her letters had prepared me for a personal change in her. On the contrary, they had led me to expect that her marriage had left her, in appearance at least, quite unaltered. Perhaps, I read her letters wrongly, in the past, and am now reading her face wrongly, in the present? No matter! Whether her beauty has gained, or whether it has lost, in the last six months, the separation, either way, has made her own dear self more precious to me than ever—and that is one good result of her marriage, at any rate!

The second change, the change that I have observed in her character, has not surprised me, because I was prepared for it, in this case, by the tone of her letters. Now that she is at home again, I find her just as unwilling to enter into any details on the subject of her married life, as I had previously found her, all through the time of our separation, when we could only communicate with each other by writing. At the first approach I made to the forbidden topic, she put her hand on my lips, with a look and gesture which touchingly, almost painfully, recalled to my memory the days of her girlhood and the happy bygone time when there were no secrets between us.

"Whenever you and I are together, Marian," she said, "we shall both be happier and easier with one another, if we accept my married life for what it is, and say and think as little about it as possible. I would tell you everything, darling, about myself," she went on, nervously buckling and unbuckling the ribbon round my waist, "if my confidences could only end there. But they could not—they would lead me into confidences about my husband, too; and, now I am married, I think I had better avoid them, for his sake, and for your

sake, and for mine. I don't say that they would distress you, or distress me—I wouldn't have you think that for the world. But—I want to be so happy, now I have got you back again; and I want you to be so happy too——” She broke off abruptly, and looked round the room, my own sitting-room, in which we were talking. “Ah!” she cried, clapping her hands with a bright smile of recognition, “another old friend found already! Your bookcase, Marian—your dear-little-shabby-old-satin-wood bookcase—how glad I am you brought it with you from Limmeridge! And your workbox, just as untidy as ever! And the horrid, heavy, man's umbrella, that you always would walk out with when it rained! And, first and foremost of all, your own dear, dark, clever, gipsy-face, looking at me just as usual! It is so like home again to be here. How can we make it more like home still? I will put my father's portrait in your room instead of in mine—and I will keep all my little treasures from Limmeridge here—and we will pass hours and hours every day with these four friendly walls round us. Oh, Marian!” she said, suddenly seating herself on a footstool at my knees, and looking up earnestly in my face, “promise you will never marry, and leave me. It is selfish to say so, but you are so much better off as a single woman—unless—unless you are very fond of your husband—but you won't be very fond of anybody but me, will you?” She stopped again; crossed my hands on my lap; and laid her face on them. “Have you been writing many letters, and receiving many letters, lately?” she asked, in low, suddenly-altered tones. I understood what the question meant; but I thought it my duty not to encourage her by meeting her half way. “Have you heard from him?” she went on, coaxing me to forgive the more direct appeal on which she now ventured, by kissing my hands, upon which her face still rested. “Is he well and happy, and getting on in his profession? Has he recovered himself—and forgotten me?”

She should not have asked those questions. She should have remembered her own resolution, on the morning when Sir Percival held her to her marriage engagement, and when she resigned the book of Hartwright's drawings into my hands for ever. But, ah me! where is the faultless human creature who can persevere in a good resolution, without sometimes failing and falling back? Where is the woman who has ever really torn from her heart the image that has been once fixed in it by a true love? Books tell us that such unearthly creatures have existed—but what does our own experience say in answer to books?

I made no attempt to remonstrate with her: perhaps, because I sincerely appreciated the fearless candour which let me see, what other women in her position might have had reasons for concealing even from their dearest friends—perhaps, because I felt, in my own heart and conscience, that, in her place I should have asked the same questions and had the same thoughts. All I could honestly do was to

reply that I had not written to him or heard from him lately, and then to turn the conversation to less dangerous topics.

There had been much to sadden me in our interview—my first confidential interview with her since her return. The change which her marriage has produced in our relations towards each other, by placing a forbidden subject between us, for the first time in our lives; the melancholy conviction of the dearth of all warmth of feeling, of all close sympathy, between her husband and herself, which her own unwilling words now force on my mind; the distressing discovery that the influence of that ill-fated attachment still remains (no matter how innocently, how harmlessly) rooted as deeply as ever in her heart—all these are disclosures to sadden any woman who loves her as dearly, and feels for her as acutely, as I do. There is only one consolation to set against them—a consolation that ought to comfort me, and that does comfort me. All the graces and gentlenesses of her character; all the frank affection of her nature; all the sweet, simple, womanly charms which used to make her the darling and the delight of every one who approached her, have come back to me with herself. Of my other impressions I am sometimes a little inclined to doubt. Of this last, best, happiest of all impressions, I grow more and more certain, every hour in the day.

Let me turn, now, from her to her travelling companions. Her husband must engage my attention first. What have I observed in Sir Percival, since his return, to improve my opinion of him?

I can hardly say. Small vexations and annoyances seem to have beset him since he came back; and no man, under those circumstances, is ever presented at his best. He looks, as I think, thinner than he was when he left England. His wearisome cough and his comfortless restlessness have certainly increased. His manner—at least, his manner towards me—is much more abrupt than it used to be. He greeted me, on the evening of his return, with little or nothing of the ceremony and civility of former times—no polite speeches of welcome—no appearance of extraordinary gratification at seeing me—nothing but a short shake of the hand, and a sharp “How-d'ye-do, Miss Halcombe—glad to see you again.” He seemed to accept me as one of the necessary fixtures of Blackwater Park; to be satisfied at finding me established in my proper place; and then to pass me over altogether.

Most men show something of their dispositions in their own houses, which they have concealed elsewhere; and Sir Percival has already displayed a mania for order and regularity, which is quite a new revelation of him, so far as my previous knowledge of his character is concerned. If I take a book from the library and leave it on the table, he follows me, and puts it back again. If I rise from a chair, and let it remain where I have been sitting, he carefully restores it to its proper place against the wall.

He picks up stray flower-blossoms from the carpet, and mutters to himself as discontentedly as if they were hot cinders burning holes in it; and he storms at the servants, if there is a crease in the tablecloth, or a knife missing from its place at the dinner-table, as fiercely as if they had personally insulted him.

I have already referred to the small annoyances which appear to have troubled him since his return. Much of the alteration for the worse which I have noticed in him, may be due to these. I try to persuade myself that it is so, because I am anxious not to be disheartened already about the future. It is certainly trying to any man's temper to be met by a vexation the moment he sets foot in his own house again, after a long absence; and this annoying circumstance did really happen to Sir Percival in my presence. On the evening of their arrival, the housekeeper followed me into the hall to receive her master and mistress and their guests. The instant he saw her, Sir Percival asked if any one had called lately. The housekeeper mentioned to him, in reply, what she had previously mentioned to me, the visit of the strange gentleman to make inquiries about the time of her master's return. He asked immediately for the gentleman's name. No name had been left. The gentleman's business? No business had been mentioned. What was the gentleman like? The housekeeper tried to describe him; but failed to distinguish the nameless visitor by any personal peculiarity which her master could recognise. Sir Percival frowned, stamped angrily on the floor, and walked on into the house, taking no notice of anybody. Why he should have been so discomposed by a trifle I cannot say—but he was seriously discomposed, beyond all doubt.

Upon the whole, it will be best, perhaps, if I abstain from forming a decisive opinion of his manners, language, and conduct in his own house, until time has enabled him to shake off the anxieties, whatever they may be, which now evidently trouble his mind in secret. I will turn over to a new page; and my pen shall let Laura's husband alone for the present.

The two guests—the Count and Countess Fosco—come next in my catalogue. I will dispose of the Countess first, so as to have done with the woman as soon as possible.

Laura was certainly not chargeable with any exaggeration, in writing me word that I should hardly recognise her aunt again, when we met. Never before have I beheld such a change produced in a woman by her marriage as has been produced in Madame Fosco. As Eleanor Fairlie (aged seven-and-thirty), she was always talking pretentious nonsense, and always worrying the unfortunate men with every small exaction which a vain and foolish woman can impose on long-suffering male humanity. As Madame Fosco (aged three-and-forty), she sits for hours together without saying a word, frozen up in the strangest manner in herself. The hideously ridiculous love-locks which used to hang on either side of her face, are now replaced by stiff

little rows of very short curls, of the sort that one sees in old-fashioned wigs. A plain, matronly cap covers her head, and makes her look, for the first time in her life, since I remember her, like a decent woman. Nobody (putting her husband out of the question, of course) now sees in her, what everybody once saw—I mean the structure of the female skeleton, in the upper regions of the collar-bones and the shoulder-blades. Clad in quiet black or grey gowns, made high round the throat—dresses that she would have laughed at, or screamed at, as the whim of the moment inclined her, in her maiden days—she sits speechless in corners; her dry white hands (so dry that the pores of her skin look chalky) incessantly engaged, either in monotonous embroidery work, or in rolling up endless little cigarettes for the Count's own particular smoking. On the few occasions, when her cold blue eyes are off her work, they are generally turned on her husband, with the look of mute submissive inquiry which we are all familiar with in the eyes of a faithful dog. The only approach to an inward thaw which I have yet detected under her outer covering of icy constraint, has betrayed itself, once or twice, in the form of a suppressed tigerish jealousy of any woman in the house (the maids included) to whom the Count speaks, or on whom he looks, with anything approaching to special interest or attention. Except in this one particular, she is always, morning, noon, and night, in-doors and out, fair weather or foul, as cold as a statue, and as impenetrable as the stone out of which it is cut. For the common purposes of society the extraordinary change thus produced in her, is, beyond all doubt, a change for the better, seeing that it has transformed her into a civil, silent, unobtrusive woman, who is never in the way. How far she is really reformed or deteriorated in her secret self, is another question. I have once or twice seen sudden changes of expression on her pinched lips, and heard sudden inflexions of tone in her calm voice, which have led me to suspect that her present state of suppression may have sealed up something dangerous in her nature, which used to evaporate harmlessly in the freedom of her former life. It is quite possible that I may be altogether wrong in this idea. My own impression, however, is, that I am right. Time will show.

And the magician who has wrought this wonderful transformation—the foreign husband who has tamed this once wayward Englishwoman till her own relations hardly know her again—the Count himself? What of the Count?

This, in two words: He looks like a man who could tame anything. If he had married a tigress, instead of a woman, he would have tamed the tigress. If he had married *me*, I should have made his cigarettes as his wife does—I should have held my tongue when he looked at me, as she holds hers.

I am almost afraid to confess it, even to these secret pages. The man has interested me, has attracted me, has forced me to like him. In

two short days, he has made his way straight into my favourable estimation—and how he has worked the miracle, is more than I can tell.

It absolutely startles me, now he is in my mind, to find how plainly I see him!—how much more plainly than I see Sir Percival, or Mr. Fairlie, or Walter Hartright, or any other absent person of whom I think, with the one exception of Laura herself! I can hear his voice, as if he was speaking at this moment. I know what his conversation was yesterday, as well as if I was hearing it now. How am I to describe him? There are peculiarities in his personal appearance, his habits, and his amusements which I should blame in the boldest terms, or ridicule in the most merciless manner, if I had seen them in another man. What is it that makes me unable to blame them, or to ridicule them, in him?

For example, he is immensely fat. Before this time, I have always especially disliked corpulent humanity. I have always maintained that the popular notion of connecting excessive grossness of size and excessive good-humour as inseparable allies, was equivalent to declaring, either that no people but amiable people ever get fat, or that the accidental addition of so many pounds of flesh has a directly favourable influence over the disposition of the person on whose body they accumulate. I have invariably combated both these absurd assertions by quoting examples of fat people who were as mean, vicious, and cruel, as the leanest and the worst of their neighbours. I have asked whether Henry the Eighth was an amiable character? whether Pope Alexander the Sixth was a good man? Whether Mr. Murderer and Mrs. Murderess Manning were not both unusually stout people? Whether hired nurses, proverbially as cruel a set of women as are to be found in all England, were not, for the most part, also as fat a set of women as are to be found in all England?—and so on, through dozens of other examples, modern and ancient, native and foreign, high and low. Holding these strong opinions on the subject with might and main, as I do at this moment, here, nevertheless, is Count Fosco, as fat as Henry the Eighth himself, established in my favour, at one day's notice, without let or hindrance from his own odious corpulence. Marvellous indeed!

Is it his face that has recommended him? It may be his face. He is a most remarkable likeness, on a large scale, of the Great Napoleon. His features have Napoleon's magnificent regularity: his expression recalls the grandly calm, immovable power of the Great Soldier's face. This striking resemblance certainly impressed me, to begin with; but there is something in him besides the resemblance, which has impressed me more. I think the influence I am now trying to find, is in his eyes. They are the most unfathomable grey eyes I ever saw; and they have at times a cold, clear, beautiful, irresistible glitter in them, which forces me to look at him, and yet causes me sensations, when I do look, which I would rather not feel. Other parts of

his face and head have their strange peculiarities. His complexion, for instance, has a singular sallowness, so much at variance with the dark brown colour of his hair, that I suspect the hair of being a wig; and his face, closely shaven all over, is smoother and freer from all marks and wrinkles than mine, though (according to Sir Percival's account of him) he is close on sixty years of age. But these are not the prominent personal characteristics which distinguish him, to my mind, from all the other men I have ever seen. The marked peculiarity which singles him out from the rank and file of humanity, lies entirely, so far as I can tell at present, in the extraordinary expression and extraordinary power of his eyes.

His manner, and his command of our language, may also have assisted him, in some degree, to establish himself in my good opinion. He has that quiet deference, that look of pleased, attentive interest, in listening to a woman, and that secret gentleness in his voice, in speaking to a woman, which, say what we may, we can none of us resist. Here, too, his unusual command of the English language necessarily helps him. I had often heard of the extraordinary aptitude which many Italians show in mastering our strong, hard Northern speech; but, until I saw Count Fosco, I had never supposed it possible that any foreigner could have spoken English as he speaks it. There are times when it is almost impossible to detect, by his accent, that he is not a countryman of our own; and, as for fluency, there are very few born Englishmen who can talk with as few stoppages and repetitions as the Count. He may construct his sentences, more or less, in the foreign way; but I have never yet heard him use a wrong expression, or hesitate for a moment in his choice of a word.

All the smallest characteristics of this strange man have something strikingly original and perplexingly contradictory in them. Fat as he is, and old as he is, his movements are astonishingly light and easy. He is as noiseless in a room as any of us women; and, more than that, with all his look of unmistakable mental firmness and power, he is as nervously sensitive as the weakest of us. He starts at chance noises as inveterately as Laura herself. He winced and shuddered yesterday, when Sir Percival beat one of the spaniels, so that I felt ashamed of my own want of tenderness and sensibility by comparison with the Count.

The relation of this last incident reminds me of one of his most curious peculiarities, which I have not yet mentioned—his extraordinary fondness for pet animals. Some of these he has left on the Continent, but he has brought with him to this house a cockatoo, two canary-birds, and a whole family of white mice. He attends to all the necessities of these strange favourites himself, and he has taught the creatures to be surprisingly fond of him, and familiar with him. The cockatoo, a most vicious and treacherous bird towards every one else, absolutely seems to love him. When he lets it out of its cage, it hops on to his knee, and claws its way up his

great big body, and rubs its top-knot against his swallow double chin in the most caressing manner imaginable. He has only to set the doors of the canaries' cages open, and to call to them; and the pretty little cleverly trained creatures perch fearlessly on his hand, mount his fat outstretched fingers one by one, when he tells them to "go up-stairs," and sing together as if they would burst their throats with delight, when they get to the top finger. His white mice live in a little pagoda of gaily-painted wirework, designed and made by himself. They are almost as tame as the canaries, and they are perpetually let out, like the canaries. They crawl all over him, popping in and out of his waistcoat, and sitting in couples, white as snow, on his capacious shoulders. He seems to be even fonder of his mice than of his other pets, smiles at them, and kisses them, and calls them by all sorts of endearing names. If it be possible to suppose an Englishman with any taste for such childish interests and amusements as these, that Englishman would certainly feel rather ashamed of them, and would be anxious to apologise for them, in the company of grown-up people. But the Count, apparently, sees nothing ridiculous in the amazing contrast between his colossal self and his frail little pets. He would blandly kiss his white mice, and twitter to his canary-birds amid an assembly of English fox-hunters, and would only pity them as barbarians when they were all laughing their loudest at him.

It seems hardly credible, while I am writing it down, but it is certainly true, that this same man, who has all the fondness of an old maid for his cockatoo, and all the small dexterities of an organ-boy in managing his white mice, can talk, when anything happens to rouse him, with a daring independence of thought, a knowledge of books in every language, and an experience of society in half the capitals of Europe, which would make him the prominent personage of any assembly in the civilised world. This trainer of canary-birds, this architect of a pagoda for white mice, is (as Sir Percival himself has told me) one of the first experimental chemists living, and has discovered, among other wonderful inventions, a means of petrifying the body after death, so as to preserve it, as hard as marble, to the end of time. This fat, indolent, elderly man, whose nerves are so finely strung that he starts at chance noises, and winces when he sees a house-spaniel get a whipping, went into the stable-yard, on the morning after his arrival, and put his hand on the head of a chained bloodhound—a beast so savage that the very groom who feeds him keeps out of his reach. His wife and I were present, and I shall not soon forget the scene that followed, short as it was.

"Mind that dog, sir," said the groom; "he flies at everybody!" "He does that, my friend," replied the Count, quietly, "because everybody is afraid of him. Let us see if he flies at *me*." And he laid his plump, yellow-white fingers, on which the canary-birds had been perching ten minutes before, upon the formidable brute's

head; and looked him straight in the eyes. "You big dogs are all cowards," he said, addressing the animal contemptuously, with his face and the dog's within an inch of each other. "You would kill a poor cat, you infernal coward. You would fly at a starving beggar, you infernal coward. Anything that you can surprise unawares—anything that is afraid of your big body, and your wicked white teeth, and your slobbering, bloodthirsty mouth, is the thing you like to fly at. You could throttle me at this moment, you mean, miserable bully; and you daren't so much as look me in the face, because I'm not afraid of you. Will you think better of it, and try your teeth in my fat neck? Bah! not you!" He turned away, laughing at the astonishment of the men in the yard; and the dog crept back meekly to his kennel. "Ah! my nice waistcoat!" he said, pathetically. "I am sorry I came here. Some of that brute's slobber has got on my pretty clean waistcoat." Those words express another of his incomprehensible oddities. He is as fond of fine clothes as the veriest fool in existence; and has appeared in four magnificent waistcoats, already—all of light garish colours, and all immensely large even for him—in the two days of his residence at Blackwater Park.

His tact and cleverness in small things are quite as noticeable as the singular inconsistencies in his character, and the childish triviality of his ordinary tastes and pursuits.

I can see already that he means to live on excellent terms with all of us, during the period of his sojourn in this place. He has evidently discovered that Laura secretly dislikes him (she confessed as much to me, when I pressed her on the subject)—but he has also found out that she is extravagantly fond of flowers. Whenever she wants a nosegay, he has got one to give her, gathered and arranged by himself; and, greatly to my amusement, he is always cunningly provided with a duplicate, composed of exactly the same flowers, grouped in exactly the same way, to appease his icily jealous wife, before she can so much as think herself aggrieved. His management of the Countess (in public) is a sight to see. He bows to her; he habitually addresses her as "my angel;" he carries his canaries to pay her little visits on his fingers, and to sing to her; he kisses her hand, when she gives him his cigarettes; he presents her with sugar-plums, in return, which he puts into her mouth playfully, from a box in his pocket. The rod of iron with which he rules her never appears in company—it is a private rod, and is always kept up-stairs.

His method of recommending himself to *me*, is entirely different. He has discovered (Heaven only knows how) that ready-made sentiment is thrown away on my blunt, matter-of-fact nature. And he flatters my vanity, by talking to me as seriously and sensibly as if I was a man. Yes! I can find him out when I am away from him; I know he flatters my vanity, when I think of him up here, in my own room—and yet, when I go down stairs, and get into his company again, he will blind me again, and I shall be

flattered again, just as if I had never found him out at all! He can manage me, as he manages his wife and Laura, as he managed the blood-hound in the stable-yard, as he manages Sir Percival himself, every hour in the day. "My good Percival! how I like your rough English humour!"—"My good Percival! how I enjoy your solid English sense!" He puts the rudest remarks Sir Percival can make on his effeminate tastes and amusements, quietly away from him in that manner—always calling the baronet by his Christian name; smiling at him with the calmest superiority; patting him on the shoulder; and bearing with him benignantly, as a good-humoured father bears with a wayward son.

The interest which I really cannot help feeling in this strangely original man, has led me to question Sir Percival about his past life. Sir Percival either knows little, or will tell me little, about it. He and the Count first met, many years ago, at Rome, under the dangerous circumstances to which I have alluded elsewhere. Since that time, they have been perpetually together in London, in Paris, and in Vienna—but never in Italy again; the Count having, oddly enough, not crossed the frontiers of his native country for years past. Perhaps, he has been made the victim of some political persecution? At all events, he seems to be patriotically anxious not to lose sight of any of his own countrymen who may happen to be in England. On the evening of his arrival, he asked how far we were from the nearest town, and whether we knew of any Italian gentlemen who might happen to be settled there. He is certainly in correspondence with people on the Continent, for his letters have all sorts of odd stamps on them; and I saw one for him, this morning, waiting in his place at the breakfast-table, with a huge official-looking seal on it. Perhaps he is in correspondence with his government? And yet, that is hardly to be reconciled, either, with my other idea that he may be a political exile.

How much I seem to have written about Count Fosco! And what does it all amount to?—as poor, dear Mr. Gilmore would ask, in his impenetrable business-like way. I can only repeat that I do assuredly feel, even on this short acquaintance, a strange, half-willing, half-unwilling liking for the Count. He seems to have established over me the same sort of ascendancy which he has evidently gained over Sir Percival. Free, and even rude, as he may occasionally be in his manner towards his fat friend, Sir Percival is nevertheless afraid, as I can plainly see, of giving any serious offence to the Count. I wonder whether I am afraid, too? I certainly never saw a man, in all my experience, whom I should be so sorry to have for an enemy. Is this because I like him, or because I am afraid of him? *Chi sa?*—as Count Fosco might say in his own language. Who knows?

2nd.—Something to chronicle, to-day, besides my own ideas and impressions. A visitor has

arrived—quite unknown to Laura and to me; and, apparently, quite unexpected by Sir Percival.

We were all at lunch, in the room with the new French windows that open into the verandah; and the Count (who devours pastry as I have never yet seen it devoured by any human beings but girls at boarding-schools) had just amused us by asking gravely for his fourth tart—when the servant entered, to announce the visitor.

"Mr. Merriman has just come, Sir Percival, and wishes to see you immediately."

Sir Percival started, and looked at the man, with an expression of angry alarm.

"Mr. Merriman?" he repeated, as if he thought his own ears must have deceived him.

"Yes, Sir Percival: Mr. Merriman, from London."

"Where is he?"

"In the library, Sir Percival."

He left the table the instant the last answer was given; and hurried out of the room without saying a word to any of us.

"Who is Mr. Merriman?" asked Laura, appealing to me.

"I have not the least idea," was all I could say in reply.

The Count had finished his fourth tart, and had gone to a side-table to look after his vicious cockatoo. He turned round to us, with the bird perched on his shoulder.

"Mr. Merriman is Sir Percival's solicitor," he said, quietly.

Sir Percival's solicitor. It was a perfectly straightforward answer to Laura's question; and yet, under the circumstances, it was not satisfactory. If Mr. Merriman had been specially sent for by his client, there would have been nothing very wonderful in his leaving town to obey the summons. But when a lawyer travels from London to Hampshire, without being sent for, and when his arrival at a gentleman's house seriously startles the gentleman himself, it may be safely taken for granted that the legal visitor is the bearer of some very important and very unexpected news—news which may be either very good or very bad, but which cannot, in either case, be of the common, every-day kind.

Laura and I sat silent at the table, for a quarter of an hour or more, wondering uneasily what had happened, and waiting for the chance of Sir Percival's speedy return. There were no signs of his return; and we rose to leave the room.

The Count, attentive as usual, advanced from the corner in which he had been feeding his cockatoo, with the bird still perched on his shoulder, and opened the door for us. Laura and Madame Fosco went out first. Just as I was on the point of following them, he made a sign with his hand, and spoke to me, before I passed him, in the oddest manner.

"Yes," he said; quietly answering the unexpressed idea at that moment in my mind, as if I had plainly confided it to him in so many words—

"yes, Miss Halcombe; something *has* happened."

I was on the point of answering, "I never said so." But the vicious cockatoo ruffled his clipped wings, and gave a screech that set all my nerves on edge in an instant, and made me only too glad to get out of the room.

I joined Laura at the foot of the stairs. The thought in her mind was the same as the thought in mine, which Count Fosco had surprised—and, when she spoke, her words were almost the echo of his. She, too, said to me, secretly, that she was afraid something had happened.

RESUSCITATING ANIMALS.

DID you ever behold an Egyptian mummy, or a Yarmouth bloater, or a red sprat, or a Dutch herring, or a rat that had been starved to death in a hole in a wall, or a pig reduced to the condition of bacon and ham, or a handful of last year's dead flies in a garret? Do you think that by any process of steaming, or stewing, or simmering, or steeping; that by any system of baths, whether vapour, shower, hot, cold, medicated, hip, slipper, or foot, natural or artificial, sulphurous or ferruginous, Preissnitzian or Schlangenbadish—do you believe that you could thereby succeed in causing that mummy to walk and talk, that bloater to disport in the German Ocean, that sprat to wriggle his silver tail, that herring to flounder in his cask of brine, that rat to nibble his way out of prison, that pig to squeak his joy at resuscitation, those flies to buzz their satisfaction, at a return to life and consciousness? Can you do that? You have your doubts. And yet, such miracles ought to be quite possible, if what has been written and printed for many a year past, be true.

There exists a set of creatures which, from their minute size, have been known to the public only since the beginning of the last century or a very little earlier. They are active in habits, complex in anatomy, very widely dispersed wherever there is water or even moisture. They are found in the rain-gutters attached to buildings, in the moss on walls and roofs and rocks, and especially in stagnant puddles and sluggish pools. Their upper extremity, or head, is crowned with a multiplicity of delicate organs, which, by an optical illusion, present the appearance of wheels revolving rapidly; on which account these animalcules have received the general denomination of Rotifers, or Wheel-bearers. Some have shells, shaped like those of tortoises, and into which they likewise draw their body, but perfectly transparent in consequence of their excessive thinness; some have no shell. Some have what are supposed to be eyes; others have no visible eyes: the tail of almost all is cleft at the end into two portions, which are very like a finger and thumb, or rather like two fingers side by side. But the most interesting point is, that all the rotifers, of which there are many species,

are perfectly distinguishable under an inexpensive microscope. They can be seen to take their food, to masticate and digest it; to move about or creep at will; to swim freely, unburdened, or with an egg or two attached to them. Their brilliant and crystalline transparency allows you to inspect their structure more thoroughly than you can inspect that of the living gold-fish swimming in the globe on your table.

Another family on whom the attention of the scientific public has been anxiously fixed are the Tardigrada, or Slow-steppers, also called Water-bears, because their shape is something intermediate between that of a bear and a six-legged caterpillar. Some of them are named Macro-bioti, or Long-livers, on account of the supposed extensibility of their existence, about which more anon. The tardigrades dwell in the same localities as the rotifers, but are much less common, without, however, being so rare as to be difficult to procure for experiment. Their size mostly is superior to that of rotifers.

Thirdly, everybody has heard of the eels in vinegar. These are not eels at all, nor lampreys, though they very much resemble eels swimming about with the fore part of their head cut off just behind the eyes, and without fins. They are a species of the genus *Anguillula*, infusorial and minute animals, very nearly related to intestinal worms. One anguillule is found in wet moss, green slime, rain water, and any little accidental puddle; another multiplies and revels in the paste made from wheaten flour, which is used by bookbinders and shoemakers; but the most famous of the family is the anguillule which is found, coiled together and intertwined in countless numbers, in the blighted kernels of diseased wheat.

All these creatures—rotifers, tardigrades, and anguillules—have the advantage of being, relatively speaking, so large, that their observation under the microscope is extremely easy. The largest specimens are visible to the unassisted eye, as whitish specks which can be seen to be in motion. Consequently, there is no need of high magnifying powers, nor of any very skilful management of light, in order to study them. They are the occupants of an aquarium which lies at everybody's command.

The marvellous part of their history—which has just exploded, like a bubble of soap-suds, at the touch of truth—is this: It is granted that these creatures are gifted with extreme tenacity of life; that they will bear cruel treatment, starvation, and drought; that they will remain dormant and torpid for years. And so will other animals with which we are acquainted, while exposed to the influence either of excessive winter's cold or of excessive summer's heat. But we have been told, of the rotifers and the tardigrades especially, that after being killed they can be brought to life again, and that not once, but after several killings; that they may be exposed to the heat of boiling water; that they may be revived after the completest desiccation, after they have been brought to and kept for an unlimited time in a state of dryness in comparison

with which the dryness of a mummy or a stockfish is humidity itself; that they are capable of an actual and material resurrection, not with a renovated or glorified body, but with the same old worn-out, martyred body, in which they gave up the ghost. To bring them back to active life, it was only necessary to restore them to their usual conditions of moisture, warmth, and food. It was as if you had merely to drop a red herring into its native element to behold it swim out to sea with a flourish of its caudal fin. Without referring to any but the highest and the most recent authorities, it may simply be stated that the apocryphal fact is reasserted in those very able and admirable works, Dr. Carpenter's *Microscope and its Revelations*, and (less positively) in the *Micrographical Dictionary*. But, unfortunately—take, O my pen! a good-dip of courage—the palingenesis of the phenix is one fable, and the resurrection of the rotifers is another.

And why has the erroneous belief been suffered to stand in printed books so long? Because men hesitate (properly) to write a flat denial of what others (often more learned and of greater authority than themselves) have written before them. The writer who now indites this page has often tried to treat himself to the spectacle of a rotifer's revivification; but never yet has that wonder ravished his eyes. He has brought rotifers to death's door; he has kept them trembling on the verge of non-existence: just as they were on the point of really perishing, he has saved them by the merciful administration of a droplet of water on the point of a pin; but there always remained a critical moment to be avoided, and which was final in its effects, if passed. While there was life, there was hope; but when once the patients were dead, they were dead as door nails. While the wheels gave the faintest sign of vitality their proprietors were recoverable; but, after that clockwork had come to a dead stop, all the Humane Societies in Europe might do their best in vain. No matter what the species of rotifer, with shells or without, from puddles, rain-gutters, or roofs of houses, with eyes or eyeless, they were all killed stone dead even by the incomplete desiccation that was produced by the atmosphere of an ordinary sitting-room, without any application of fire or sun heat. After death, no coaxing, no kind treatment, neither soft words nor soft water, nor the requisite conditions of moisture, warmth, and food, could persuade a rotifer to make its wheel spin half a revolution. There the poor things lay, with all their machinery flabby and motionless, awaiting a decent interment. And why did not the writer proclaim his belief that rotifers, like other animals, die, when they do die, for good and all? Because the writer was a literary poltroon, who did not care to be snubbed by microscopical magnates, who might have pelted him and his sincere convictions, with a bushful of magnificent names, beginning with Spallanzani and ending with—Heaven defend us!—Doyère, the gentle philosopher who sends a huissier or

bailiff with a lawyer's letter to those who dare to dispute or question his revivifications of rotifers and tardigrades.

A gentleman who has a greater right to speak loudly if he chose, Mr. Philip Henry Gosse, has devoted to the Wheel-bearers a tolerably long and full chapter of his *Evenings with the Microscope*; but with all his skill in manipulation, and with all his endeavours to reproduce and verify published statements, he is unable to announce the fact that he has ever restored a defunct rotifer to life; quite the contrary.

Resuscitating animalcules, of what family or genus soever, have at last received a mortal and irremediable stroke from the hands of Monsieur F. A. Pouchet, Director of the Museum of Natural History, and Professor at the School of Medicine and at the Superior School of Sciences at Rouen. These resurrections ought really to be put down, because they overstep the limits of all rational tradition, and because they do equal violence to nature and to common sense. Spallanzani himself confesses that we cannot show too much mistrust and hesitation with respect to what he calls "the most paradoxical truth which natural history has to offer." Most people will fully share the impressions entertained by the Italian physiologist. Leuwenhoek, the veritable founder of micrography, was the first to discover, in 1701, the vital tenacity of the rotifers. Having collected, out of gutters, some sand which contained these animalcules, the celebrated Dutchman wished to ascertain whether, after having dried it, it would still produce any on moistening it again. After having wetted the sand, to his great astonishment he found that it again became peopled with the same creatures which he had previously found in it. So sagacious an observer as Leuwenhoek would hardly mistake this phenomenon for a resurrection; nor did he. He considered, with reason, that the fact he had witnessed was analogous to those which are observed to happen with certain insects' eggs and certain larvæ, which are occasionally protected by their outer coating for a length of time.

But, other observers were not equally cautious in drawing their inferences. Needham (in the *Philosophical Transactions*), more adventurous than the learned Dutchman, having seen the anguillules of blighted wheat revive after the grains of wheat had been dried, asserted that those animalcules underwent a veritable resurrection. Spallanzani especially, about 1775, gave an immense celebrity to the resurrectional hypothesis. He undertook a number of experiments, by which he professed to remove all doubt about this extraordinary phenomenon, and the great reputation of the physiologist of Pavia caused these false reviviscences to be considered as established facts. Several naturalists of the present day have placed them at least in a doubtful position. And yet Spallanzani was fully aware how incomprehensible was the physiological anomaly of which he has written so long an account. "An animal which resuscitates after death," he says, "and which

within certain limits resuscitates as often as you will, is a phenomenon as unheard of as it appears at first improbable and paradoxical: it confounds every received idea concerning animality." Never did the learned Italian utter words of more sober reason; we wonder why his instinctive doubts had so little effect in curbing his imagination. His experiments were greatly in vogue, on account of the attractive manner in which he described them. It must be confessed that his chapter on this subject, bearing at the head of every page the inscription, **EXPERIMENTS ON THE ANIMALS WHICH MAY BE KILLED AND RESUSCITATED AT WILL**, was well adapted to stimulate public curiosity.

The Abbé Fontana was one of the supporters of revivification. He displayed the spectacle to persons of distinction who passed through Florence, but few of his observations have been given to the public. "He dare not broach the subject in writing," said Dupaty, "for fear of being excommunicated: all the power of the grand-duke could not save him." Nevertheless, he mentions it, in his celebrated *Treatise on the Poison of the Viper*. In these latter days, Monsieur Doyère, the most ardent palingenist of the age, in his *Monographie des Tardigrades*, pretends that these animals are able to support very high temperatures and absolute desiccation, without losing the faculty of resurrection. It is this thesis which has been demolished by M. Pouchet. It ought also to be mentioned that, within the last few years, Schultze made considerable efforts to increase the number of resurrectionists. He exhibited to a great number of persons, samples of sand which had remained in a dry state for a considerable period, and which became full of rotifers after being moistened. Nor did he confine himself to this simple display; he distributed in all directions, by letter, little packets of sand, apparently inanimate, but which the mere application of moisture, under the eyes of his marvelling correspondents, proved to be full of living creatures. This experiment may be repeated any day, and thinking men are now unanimous in considering it absolutely insignificant, as far as the solution of the question is concerned.

Extraordinary examples of tenaciousness of life are far from rare in the annals of natural history. The love of the marvellous, which has exerted its influence on men of well-merited reputation, has often led them to reproduce these wondrous accounts without sufficient examination. Intestinal worms and their eggs have been believed to be capable of undergoing ordeals which are now contested by those best acquainted with the worms themselves. Certain persons have gone so far as to credit the existence of reviviscible serpents. Bouguer speaks of an amphisbena, which is most commonly met with near the mouth of the Orinoco, which is seen to come to life again after it has been ten years dried, either in the open air, or on the branch of a tree, or even inside a chimney. To enjoy this phenomenon, it is only necessary to

plunge the reptile in water that has been exposed to the sun.

It is essential to observe that, with the resurrectionists, the question is not to prove that the vital functions may be incompletely suspended for a greater or less duration of time by the effect of physical causes, but that they may be completely annihilated without compromising the animal's existence; in short, that an animal completely mummified, may be resuscitated by the influence of water externally and internally applied.

Some observers have shown unparalleled levity in the way in which they have settled the question, whilst Ehrenberg had the wisdom not to do so till after he had carefully examined and refuted, one by one, the hypotheses of the resurrectionists. Ehrenberg has demonstrated, with great logical force, that "the cessation of vital movement in any animal is evidently death." In fact, whensoever in any animal the embryonic life has commenced, its absolute suspension is absolute death. The egg of the rotifer may, probably, be preserved for a very long time in a stagnant state, but, as is the case with the egg of a fowl, or with the seed even of a vegetable, when once its vital cycle has commenced its orbit, no absolute suspension is possible. Even if such a number of justly renowned naturalists had not protested against the resurrection of the rotifers and the tardigrades, Ehrenberg alone would suffice to crush all its partisans. He and Bory de St. Vincent do not hesitate to say that "desiccation is death." Consequently, the former of these writers is right in asserting that the animalcules which people believe they have revived have never been absolutely dried in the sand which contained them. In this case, he says, the sand and the moss preserve them from desiccation, exactly as the thick garments of the Arabs protect them from the burning heat of the desert.

The whole question is laid open and explained in these few words. The rotifers, the tardigrades, and the anguillules, are preserved under the protection of their envelope and by the help of the hygroscopicity of the sand, precisely as happens to a multitude of adult animals or their progeny, under analogous circumstances; and the only reason why certain philosophers have regarded as a prodigy, facts which are frequently occurring in zoology, is, because they have not embraced the subject from a higher and more general point of view. This make-believe resurrection is not at all more extraordinary than the return to active life—we cannot say to existence—of certain animals which remain for a year and more contracted and motionless within their natural envelope.

If we cast but a mere glance at the entire zoological series, we shall soon perceive that the vital resistance of certain animals, or of their reproductive bodies, is even more and otherwise remarkable than the phenomenon of the revivification of animalcules, reduced to its legitimate value. The eggs of insects, on the branches of trees, resist the rigours of severe and variable

seasons, without injury. Certain crustaceans afford instances of the extraordinary resistance to desiccation of which their progeny are capable. The cyprides, which are almost microscopic, have eggs of extreme tenuity, and which remain without drying up or shrivelling in the mud of ponds laid dry all the summer long, and which are hatched and developed as soon as the autumnal rains return. Is not that a fact as remarkable as the history of the rotifer found on roofs? The *Apus cancriformis* presents us with a still more extraordinary case. According to the statements of naturalists, its eggs appear capable of preservation for several years, without losing their vitality; and it is thus that they explain the presence of myriads of these crustaceans, which are observed to appear immediately after heavy rains, in places where they had not been seen for years. If you search the history of the molluscs, you will find that there exist great numbers which, beneath the shelter of their shell, will live for an extraordinary period without communication with the external world, if they are surprised and surrounded by unfavourable circumstances. Some, in spite of their absolutely aquatic habits, occasionally remain dry during the whole interval between the highest tides; that is to say, a month or more. Others, which inhabit the tufts of moss in which the rotifers themselves are found, seem absolutely destined to participate in the very same vital phases. Certain snails hibernate for six whole months, and close their dwelling with a door secreted for the purpose. M. Flourens kept several of these animals for a whole year, without food; they showed signs of reanimation when the illustrious physiologist treated them to a feast of fresh-cut grass. We may even state that, under certain circumstances, some few of the tiny molluscs to which we have referred exhibit a suspension of vitality much more miraculous than that which is attributed to the rotifers. M. Moquin-Tandon, in his magnificent work, relates that he has seen snails come out of their shell and crawl about, after remaining shut up for from a year and a half to two years. He kept several punctuated clausillas screwed up in a piece of paper for twenty-six months. M. St. Simon saw porcelain zonites that lived two years and a half without aliment. M. Sarrazin forgot in a box some specimens of pupa quinquedentata which he collected in 1843, and these creatures were still living in 1847, four years afterwards!

Was it ever supposed that all these animals defied the lapse of time only by the aid of desiccation, and that they were reanimated by the application of water alone? The case is the same with the rotifers. If they have been made the subject of such marvellous tales, it is simply because their extreme minuteness allowed any and every supposition to be hazarded; while, with regard to others, although very small as molluscs, the truth was too easily demonstrable by merely crushing them. M. Seguin imbedded some toads in plaster, and kept them in pots, he believes for ten years, but is not quite certain.

On breaking the plaster, he found that one of the pots contained a toad in perfect health; the plaster was exactly moulded over it, and filled every vacant space. As soon as the plaster was broken, the toad struggled to get out of prison, but was held back by one of its feet, which still stuck fast. When this was disengaged, it jumped on the ground, and at once resumed its habitual movements, as if there had occurred no interruption in its mode of existence. After such instances of vital persistence, ought we to shout, "A miracle!" so loudly, because a few rotifers or a few tardigrades may be preserved for a certain time in the midst of sand, and show signs of life only when the sand is wetted? The fact is less extraordinary than that related of the toad; for, the rotifer, when it contracts itself, finds a protection in its rings and its shell, whereas the reptile remains naked in the medium which environs it.

The causes of error in the experiments on pseudo-resurrection are not difficult to indicate. The revivals, which are looked upon with such wonderment, are nothing else than either the hatching of a new generation, or the waking up of animalcules, which had been preserved from utter dryness by their natural envelope, and which, by that means, had retained their vitality for a considerable period. But in both these cases, pseudo-resurrection has its limits; and we must not follow the example of certain naturalists, who accord to this phenomenon an unlimited duration. "All the rotifers," says Bory de St. Vincent, "are aquatic; and we cannot help believing that, in consequence of their complicated structure, drought acting upon them exactly as it does on fishes and other creatures that live in a watery medium, it must kill them rapidly, without any possibility of resurrection after death. It is true that, on several occasions, by macerating water-weeds that had long been dried, and by putting water into vessels full of sediment in which we had kept or bred animalcules the preceding year, we have raised a population of rotifers and other microscopical creatures; they were simply hatched and developed therein, like the minute crustaceans, whose germs remain buried and incased in mud until the rainy season supplies the moisture necessary for their hatching and growth."

The causes of error are best detected by operating upon a determinate and quite limited number of animalcules. It then becomes evident, first, that living animalcules, which have contracted themselves to escape desiccation, are revivable in this state, only for a very limited time, which in summer does not exceed twenty days. Secondly, when you operate on dry mould, the produce is often new-hatched young, which make their appearance, after a long preservation, within their conservative envelopes, as occurs with the eggs and chrysalides of many insects, of crustaceans and other animals. These hatchings have so often led the resurrectionists into error, that even in experiments on a very restricted number of

animalcules, they will lead the micograph to wrong conclusions. In experiments in which M. Pouchet had employed no more than from four to six animalcules, carefully counted, he obtained false resurrections that were greater in number than the individuals whom he had submitted to a short desiccation. He has seen four young rotifers on a glass, which, after two days' drying, resuscitated to the number of five. He has also exposed six rotifers to a real drying; on moistening them again, he only obtained six corpses of those animals, and—one very little live anguillule, which certainly was not amongst them beforehand. In the first of these cases, there was a fresh hatch; in the second, an animalcule which, in the egg, had resisted a degree of drought insupportable by the animalcule after once it had left the shell.

Students who observe multitudes of infusoria, are aware how difficult is the determination of their species: and therefore, to remove all doubt on this point, M. Pouchet had recourse to Ehrenberg himself. On receiving, in a letter, a pinch of sand obtained from the gutters of the cathedral of Rouen, the illustrious zoologist of Berlin moistened it, and, to use his own words, "resuscitated the animalcules which were not dead." He recognised the rotifers to be, almost all, specimens of the *Callidina triodon*, and the tardigrades of *Macrobiotus Hufelandii*. The main characteristic of these experiments is their extreme simplicity; any one who chooses can repeat them. The moss is gathered from a roof, removing with it the vegetable mould on which it grows. This moss almost always contains a certain number of rotifers, anguillules, and tardigrades. In the greater part of M. Pouchet's experiments, he made use of the tufts of moss found in the gutters of the cathedral, or on the roof of one of the hospitals at Rouen. The mode of obtaining the animalcules is very simple. The mould hanging to the moss is slightly moistened; by squeezing it gently between the fingers, a drop or two of water are made to exude, which are received in a watch-glass. When the moss is inhabited by a certain number of animalcules, this drop of water always contains several. They are recognised by the help of the most ordinary microscope, and are carefully counted. This done, if the quantity of mould contained by the droplet of water does not appear sufficiently abundant, a little sand is let fall into the water, for the sake of conforming to Spallanzani's directions. This sand is the object of great attention, in order to avoid its being said that its composition has had any effect on the animalcules. M. Pouchet selects it as pure as possible; then he brings it to a red heat; then he submits it to the action of chlorhydric acid; afterwards, it is well washed, dried, and passed through a silken sieve.

The number of animalcules having been registered, the date and the temperature noted, the watch-glass is covered with another glass; and in order that the drying may be more gradual, the watch-glasses are placed beneath a small bell-glass, and in the shade. Spallanzani pro-

claims that the grand point to ensure success is to operate with sand; the unfailing result of his experiments, he says, was that the animalcules never returned to life unless they were in places where there was sufficient sand.

The mummies are manufactured; what is to become of them? All the resurrectionists agree in stating that the rotifers, which will resuscitate, are easily distinguished from those that are dead for good and all; which is perfectly true. Because, as has been already remarked, those which will come to life again are still impregnated with a slight amount of moisture, and the fluid remaining in their tissues renders them transparent; whilst those which are really dead, having really arrived at the state of desiccation, are yellow and opaque. And that is the whole of the mystery.

John Hunter said that there was no great anatomist who had not had great quarrels; a similar destiny appears to be allotted to zoologists. Nevertheless, we are justified in assuming that, all the world over, vitality is governed by the same laws. The volume of an animal's body has nothing to do with the question. If a mummified atom can be resuscitated, why not a mummified shellfish, a mummified insect, or a mummified mammoth? The vacuum under an air-pump's receiver, which has been vaunted as such a searching test of dryness, does not in the least affect or dry the animalcules, protected as they are by an impermeable envelope. It is just as if you were to place under the receiver an india-rubber bladder filled with water.

The phenomena of false resurrection last for a much shorter time than is generally stated. If the mould experimented on, forms a heap, its hygroscopicity (that is, its power of absorbing and retaining water) allows the animals, or their progeny, to remain a long while in the midst of it, without drying, and consequently without perishing. But if the mould is spread out excessively thin upon a plate of glass, the animalcules are dried more rapidly, and perish in summer in less than two months.

The false resuscitating animalcules are endowed with a great power of vital resistance, which is in accordance with the sudden changes they experience in their dwelling-place. M. Pouchet's experiments prove that they will bear an abrupt leap in temperature of 100° centigrade, without in the least affecting their reviviscence.

In order to avoid all illusion, and to come to a positive result as to facts, it is requisite, first, to see the creatures living; next, to see them die; and lastly, to see them come to life again. It is then perceived that, far from being capable of reanimation several times, not a single animalcule that is once dry and dead is ever resuscitated. The animalcules which some philosophers have endowed almost with immortality, have been believed by others to enjoy a not less prodigious incombustibility. It has been pretended that several of them could undergo, without perishing, a temperature of 190°, and even 150° centigrade; that is, half as hot again as boiling water. It is a fact which ought to be struck off

the annals of positive science. In the experiments which M. Pouchet continually repeated during three months at the Museum of Natural History at Rouen, he never found any animalcule which could bear 100°, or the boiling-point. The rotifers perished at from 85° to 90°; the tardigrades at from 80° to 85°; and the anguillules at about 75°.

SHADOWS ON THE WALL.

BESIDE the hearth there is an hour of dreaming,
A calm and pensive solitude of soul,
When life and death have each another seeming,
And thoughts are with us owning no control.
These are the spirits, Memory's revealing,
In deep solemnity they rise and fall,
Shrouding the living present, and concealing
The world around us—Shadows on the Wall.
Hopes, like the leaves and blossoms, rudely shaken
By cruel winds of winter, from the tree
Of our existence; phantoms that awaken
Wild passing gleams of Joy's young ecstasy;
And Love, once kind and tenderly outpouring
Her wine into our souls, we may recal,
And find them dear and ever heavenward soaring,
Though only now as Shadows on the Wall.
Old clasping hands, old friendships and affections
Once bodied forms beside us on the earth,
Come back to haunt us, ghostly recollections
With mystic converse by the silent hearth.
Yet these are kindly spirits, and retiring
Draw their long shadows slowly from the wall,
And visit us in peace and gentleness, inspiring
A hope that brings the sunshine after all.

THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

My day's no-business beckoning me to the East end of London, I had turned my face to that point of the metropolitan compass on leaving Covent-Garden, and had got past the India House, thinking in my idle manner of Tippoo-Sahib and Charles Lamb, and had got past my little wooden midshipman, after affectionately patting him on one leg of his knee-shorts for old acquaintance' sake, and had got past Aldgate Pump, and had got past the Saracen's Head (with an ignominious rash of posting-bills disfiguring his swarthy countenance), and had strolled up the empty yard of his ancient neighbour the Black or Blue Boar, or Bull, who departed this life I don't know when, and whose coaches are all gone I don't know where, and I had come out again into the age of railways, and I had got past Whitechapel Church, and was—rather inappropriately for an Uncommercial Traveller—in the Commercial Road. Pleasantly wallowing in the abundant mud of that thoroughfare, and greatly enjoying the huge piles of building belonging to the sugar refiners, the little masts and vanes in small back gardens in back streets, the neighbouring canals and docks, the India-vans lumbering along their stone tramway, and the pawnbrokers' shops where hard-up Mates had pawned so many sextants and quadrants, that I should have bought a few cheap if I had the least notion how to use them,

I at last began to file off to the right, towards Wapping.

Not that I intended to take boat at Wapping Old Stairs, or that I was going to look at the locality, because I believe (for I don't) in the constancy of the young woman who told her sea-going lover, to such a beautiful old tune, that she had ever continued the same, since she gave him the 'baccor-box marked with his name; I am afraid he usually got the worst of those transactions, and was frightfully taken in. No, I was going to Wapping, because an Eastern police magistrate had said, through the morning papers, that there was no classification at the Wapping workhouse for women, and that it was a disgrace and a shame and divers other hard names, and because I wished to see how the fact really stood. For, that Eastern police magistrates are not always the wisest men of the East, may be inferred from their course of procedure respecting the fancy-dressing and pantomime-posturing at St. George's in that quarter: which is usually, to discuss the matter at issue, in a state of mind betokening the weakest perplexity, with all parties concerned and unconcerned, and, for a final expedient, to consult the complainant as to what he thinks ought to be done with the defendant, and take the defendant's opinion as to what he would recommend to be done with himself.

Long before I reached Wapping I gave myself up as having lost my way, and, abandoning myself to the narrow streets in a Turkish frame of mind, relied on predestination to bring me somehow or other to the place I wanted if I were ever to get there. When I had ceased for an hour or so to take any trouble about the matter, I found myself on a swing-bridge, looking down at some dark locks in some dirty water. Over against me, stood a creature remotely in the likeness of a young man, with a puffed fallow face, and a figure all dirty and shiny and slimy, who may have been the youngest son of his filthy old father, Thames, or the drowned man about whom there was a placard on the granite post like a large thimble, that stood between us.

I asked this apparition what it called the place? Unto which, it replied, with a ghastly grin and with a sound like gurgling water in its throat:

"Mister Baker's trap."

As it is a point of great sensitiveness with me on such occasions to be equal to the intellectual pressure of the conversation, I deeply considered the meaning of this speech, while I eyed the apparition—then engaged in hugging and sucking a horizontal iron bar at the top of the locks. Inspiration suggested to me that Mr. Baker was the acting Coroner of that neighbourhood.

"A common place for suicide," said I, looking down at the locks.

"Sue?" returned the ghost, with a stare. "Yes! And Poll. Likeways Emly. And Nancy. And Jane;" he sucked the iron between each name; "and all the biling. Ketches off their bonnets or shorls, takes a run, and headers

down here, they doos. Always a headerin' down here, they is. Like one o'clock."

"And at about that hour of the morning, I suppose?"

"Ah!" said the apparition. "They an't partickler. Two 'ull do for *them*. Three. All times o' night. O'ny mind you!" Here the apparition rested its profile on the bar, and gurgled in a sarcastic manner. "There must be somebody comin'. They don't go a headerin' down here, wen there an't no Bobby nor gen'ral Cove, fur to hear the splash."

According to my interpretation of these words, I was myself a General Cove, or member of the miscellaneous public. In which modest character, I remarked:

"They are often taken out, are they, and restored?"

"I dunno about restored," said the apparition, who, for some occult reason, very much objected to that word; "they're carried into the werkiss and put into a 'ot bath, and brought round. But I dunno about restored," said the apparition; "blow *that*!"—and vanished.

As it had shown a desire to become offensive, I was not sorry to find myself alone, especially as the "werkiss" it had indicated with a twist of its matted head, was close at hand. So I left Mr. Baker's terrible trap (baited with a scum that was like the soapy rinsing of sooty chimneys), and made bold to ring at the workhouse gate, where I was wholly unexpected and quite unknown.

A very bright and nimble little matron, with a bunch of keys in her hand, responded to my request to see the House. I began to doubt whether the police magistrate was quite right in his facts, when I noticed her quick active little figure and her intelligent eyes.

The Traveller (the matron intimated) should see the worst first. He was welcome to see everything. Such as it was, there it all was.

This was the only preparation for our entering "the Foul wards." They were in an old building squeezed away in a corner of a paved yard, quite detached from the more modern and spacious main body of the workhouse. They were in a building most monstrously behind the time—a mere series of garrets or lofts, with every inconvenient and objectionable circumstance in their construction, and only accessible by steep and narrow staircases, infamously ill adapted for the passage up-stairs of the sick or down stairs of the dead.

A-bed in these miserable rooms, here on bedsteads, there (for a change, as I understood it) on the floor, were women in every stage of distress and disease. None but those who have attentively observed such scenes, can conceive the extraordinary variety of expression still latent under the general monotony and uniformity of colour, attitude, and condition. The form a little coiled up and turned away, as though it had turned its back on this world for ever; the uninterested face at once lead-coloured and yellow, looking passively upward from the pillow; the haggard mouth a little dropped, the

hand outside the coverlet, so dull and indifferent, so light and yet so heavy; these were on every pallet; but, when I stopped beside a bed, and said ever so slight a word to the figure lying there, the ghost of the old character came into the face, and made the Foul ward as various as the fair world. No one appeared to care to live, but no one complained; all who could speak, said that as much was done for them as could be done there, that the attendance was kind and patient, that their suffering was very heavy, but they had nothing to ask for. The wretched rooms were as clean and sweet as it is possible for such rooms to be; they would become a pest-house in a single week, if they were ill-kept.

I accompanied the brisk matron up another barbarous staircase, into a better kind of loft devoted to the idiotic and imbecile. There was at least Light in it, whereas the windows in the former wards had been like sides of schoolboys birdcages. There was a strong grating over the fire here, and, holding a kind of state on either side of the hearth, separated by the breadth of this grating, were two old ladies in a condition of feeble dignity, which was surely the very last and lowest reduction of self-complacency, to be found in this wonderful humanity of ours. They were evidently jealous of each other, and passed their whole time (as some people do, whose fires are not grated) in mentally disparaging each other, and contemptuously watching their neighbours. One of these parodies on provincial gentlewomen was extremely talkative, and expressed a strong desire to attend the service on Sundays, from which she represented herself to have derived the greatest interest and consolation when allowed that privilege. She gossiped so well, and looked altogether so cheery and harmless, that I began to think this a case for the Eastern magistrate, until I found that on the last occasion of her attending chapel, she had secreted a small stick, and had caused some confusion in the responses by suddenly producing it and belabouring the congregation.

So, these two old ladies, separated by the breadth of the grating—otherwise they would fly at one another's caps—sat all day long, suspecting one another, and contemplating a world of fits. For everybody else in the room had fits, except the wardswoman: an elderly, able-bodied pauperess, with a large upper lip, and an air of repressing and saving her strength, as she stood with her hands folded before her, and her eyes slowly rolling, biding her time for catching or holding somebody. This civil personage (in whom I regretted to identify a reduced member of my honourable friend Mrs. Gamp's family) said, "They has 'em continiwal, sir. They drops without no more notice than if they was coach-horses dropped from the moon, sir. And when one drops, another drops, and sometimes there'll be as many as four or five on 'em at once, dear me, a rollin' and a tearin', bless you!—this young woman, now, has 'em dreadful bad."

She turned up this young woman's face with her hand as she said it. This young woman was

seated on the floor, pondering, in the foreground of the afflicted. There was nothing repellent, either in her face or head. Many, apparently worse, varieties of epilepsy and hysteria were about her, but she was said to be the worst there. When I had spoken to her a little, she still sat with her face turned up, pondering, and a gleam of the mid-day sun shone in upon her.

—Whether this young woman, and the rest of these so sorely troubled, as they sit or lie pondering in their confused dull way, ever get mental glimpses among the notes in the sunlight, of healthy people and healthy things? Whether this young woman, brooding like this in the summer season, ever thinks that somewhere there are trees and flowers, even mountains and the great sea? Whether, not to go so far, this young woman ever has any dim revelation of that young woman—that young woman who is not here and never will come here, who is courted, and caressed, and loved, and has a husband, and bears children, and lives in a home, and who never knows what it is to have this lashing and tearing coming upon her? And whether this young woman, God help her, gives herself up then, and drops like a coach-horse from the moon?

I hardly knew whether the voices of infant children, penetrating into so hopeless a place, made a sound that was pleasant or painful to me. It was something to be reminded that the weary world was not all weary, and was ever renewing itself; but, this young woman was a child not long ago, and a child not long hence might be such as she. Howbeit, the active step and eye of the vigilant matron conducted me past the two provincial gentlewomen (whose dignity was ruffled by the children), and into the adjacent nursery.

There were many babies here, and more than one handsome young mother. There were ugly young mothers also, and sullen young mothers, and callous young mothers. But, the babies had not appropriated to themselves any bad expression yet, and might have been, for anything that appeared to the contrary in their soft faces, Princes Imperial, and Princesses Royal. I had the pleasure of giving a poetical commission to the baker's man to make a cake with all despatch and toss it into the oven for one red-headed young pauper and myself, and felt much the better for it. Without that refreshment, I doubt if I should have been in a condition for "the Refractories," towards whom my quick little matron—for whose adaptation to her office I had by this time conceived a genuine respect—drew me next, and marshalled me the way that I was going.

The Refractories were picking oakum, in a small room giving on a yard. They sat in line on a form, with their backs to a window; before them, a table, and their work. The oldest Refractory was, say twenty; youngest Refractory, say sixteen. I have never yet ascertained, in the course of my uncommercial travels, why a Refractory habit should affect the tonsils and uvula; but, I have always observed that Refractories of both sexes and every grade, be-

tween a Ragged School and the Old Bailey, have one voice, in which the tonsils and uvula gain a diseased ascendancy.

"Five pound indeed! I hain't a going fur to pick five pound," said the Chief of the Refractories, keeping time to herself with her head and chin. "More than enough to pick what we picks now, in sitch a place as this, and on wot we gets here!"

(This was in acknowledgment of a delicate intimation that the amount of work was likely to be increased. It certainly was not heavy then, for one Refractory had already done her day's task—it was barely two o'clock—and was sitting behind it, with a head exactly matching it.)

"A pretty Ouse this is, matron, ain't it?" said Refractory Two, "where a pleeseman's called in, if a gal says a word!"

"And wen you're sent to prison for nothink or less!" said the Chief, tugging at her oakum, as if it were the matron's hair. "But any place is better than this; that's one thing, and be thankful!"

A laugh of Refractories led by Oakum Head with folded arms—who originated nothing, but who was in command of the skirmishers outside the conversation.

"If any place is better than this," said my brisk guide, in the calmest manner, "it is a pity you left a good place when you had one."

"Ho, no, I didn't, matron," returned the Chief, with another pull at her oakum, and a very expressive look at the enemy's forehead. "Don't say that, matron, 'cos it's lies!"

Oakum Head brought up the skirmishers again, skirmished, and retired.

"And I warn't a going," exclaimed Refractory Two, "though I was in one place for as long as four year—I warn't a going fur to stop in a place that warn't fit for me—there! And where the fam'ly warn't 'spectable characters—there! And where I fort'nately or hunfort'nately found that the people warn't what they pretended to make themselves out to be—there! And where it wasn't their faults, by chalks, if I warn't made bad and ruined—Hah!"

During this speech, Oakum Head had again made a diversion with the skirmishers, and had again withdrawn.

The Uncommercial Traveller ventured to remark that he supposed Chief Refractory and Number One, to be the two young women who had been taken before the magistrate?

"Yes!" said the Chief, "we har! and the wonder is, that a pleeseman an't 'ad in now, and we took off agen. You can't open your lips here, without a pleeseman."

Number Two laughed (very uvularly), and the skirmishers followed suit.

"I'm sure I'd be thankful," protested the Chief, looking sideways at the Uncommercial, "if I could be got into a place, or got abroad. I'm sick and tired of this precious Ouse, I am, with reason."

So would be, and so was, Number Two. So would be, and so was, Oakum Head. So would be, and so were, Skirmishers.

The Uncommercial took the liberty of hinting that he hardly thought it probable that any lady or gentleman in want of a likely young domestic of retiring manners, would be tempted into the engagement of either of the two leading Refractories, on her own presentation of herself as per sample.

"It ain't no good being nothink else here," said the Chief.

The Uncommercial thought it might be worth trying.

"Oh no it ain't," said the Chief.

"Not a bit of good," said Number Two.

"And I'm sure I'd be very thankful to be got into a place, or got abroad," said the Chief.

"And so should I," said Number Two. "Truly thankful, I should."

Oakum Head then rose, and announced as an entirely new idea, the mention of which profound novelty might be naturally expected to startle her unprepared hearers, that she would be very thankful to be got into a place, or got abroad. And, as if she had then said, "Chorus, ladies!" all the Skirmishers struck up to the same purpose. We left them, thereupon, and began a long long walk among the women who were simply old and infirm; but whenever, in the course of this same walk, I looked out of any high window that commanded the yard, I saw Oakum Head and all the other Refractories looking out at their low window for me, and never failing to catch me, the moment I showed my head.

In ten minutes I had ceased to believe in such fables of a golden time as youth, the prime of life, or a hale old age. In ten minutes, all the lights of womankind seemed to have been blown out, and nothing in that way to be left this vault to brag of, but the flickering and expiring snuffs.

And what was very curious, was, that these dim old women had one company notion which was the fashion of the place. Every old woman who became aware of a visitor and was not in bed, hobbled over a form into her accustomed seat, and became one of a line of dim old women confronting another line of dim old women across a narrow table. There was no obligation whatever upon them to range themselves in this way; it was their manner of "receiving." As a rule, they made no attempt to talk to one another, or to look at the visitor, or to look at anything, but sat silently working their mouths, like a sort of poor old Cows. In some of these wards, it was good to see a few green plants; in others, an isolated Refractory acting as nurse, who did well enough in that capacity, when separated from her compeers; every one of these wards, day room, night room, or both combined, was scrupulously clean and fresh. I have seen as many such places as most travellers in my line, and I never saw one such, better kept.

Among the bedridden there was great patience, great reliance on the books under the pillow, great faith in God. All cared for sympathy, but none much cared to be encouraged with hope of recovery; on the whole, I should

say, it was considered rather a distinction to have a complication of disorders, and to be in a worse way than the rest. From some of the windows the river could be seen with all its life and movement; the day was bright, but I came upon no one who was looking out.

In one large ward, sitting by the fire in arm-chairs of distinction, like the President and Vice of the good company, were two old women, upwards of ninety years of age. The younger of the two, just turned ninety, was deaf, but not very, and could easily be made to hear. In her early time she had nursed a child, who was now another old woman, more infirm than herself, inhabiting the very same chamber. She perfectly understood this when the matron told it, and, with sundry nods and motions of her forefinger, pointed out the woman in question. The elder of this pair, ninety-three, seated before an illustrated newspaper (but not reading it), was a bright-eyed old soul, really not deaf, wonderfully preserved, and amazingly conversational. She had not long lost her husband, and had been in that place little more than a year. At Boston, in the State of Massachusetts, this poor creature would have been individually addressed, would have been tended in her own room, and would have had her life gently assimilated to a comfortable life out of doors. Would that be much to do in England for a woman who has kept herself out of a workhouse more than ninety rough long years? When Britain first, at Heaven's command, arose, with a great deal of allegorical confusion, from out the azure main, did her guardian angels positively forbid it in the Charter which has been so much be-sung?

The object of my journey was accomplished when the nimble matron had no more to show me. As I shook hands with her at the gate, I told her that I thought Justice had not used her very well, and that the wise men of the East were not infallible.

Now, I reasoned with myself, as I made my journey home again, concerning those Foul wards. They ought not to exist; no person of common decency and humanity can see them and doubt it. But what is this Union to do? The necessary alteration would cost several thousands of pounds; it has already to support three workhouses; its inhabitants work hard for their bare lives, and are already rated for the relief of the Poor to the utmost extent of reasonable endurance. One poor parish in this very Union is rated to the amount of FIVE AND SIXPENCE in the pound, at the very same time when the rich parish of Saint George's, Hanover-square, is rated at about SEVENPENCE in the pound, Paddington at about FOURPENCE, Saint James's, Westminster, at about TENPENCE! It is only through the equalisation of Poor Rates that what is left undone in this wise, can be done. Much more is left undone, or is ill-done, than I have space to suggest in these notes of a single uncommercial journey; but, the wise men of the East, before they can reasonably hold forth about it, must look to the North and South and West; let them also, any morning

before taking the seat of Solomon, look into the shops and dwellings all around the Temple, and first ask themselves "how much more can these poor people—many of whom keep themselves with difficulty enough out of the workhouse—bear?"

I had yet other matter for reflection, as I journeyed home, inasmuch as, before I altogether departed from the neighbourhood of Mr. Baker's trap, I had knocked at the gate of the workhouse of St. George's-in-the-East, and had found it to be an establishment highly creditable to those parts, and thoroughly well administered by a most intelligent master. I remarked in it, an instance of the collateral harm that obstinate vanity and folly can do. "This was the Hall where those old paupers, male and female, whom I had just seen, met for the Church service, was it?"—"Yes."—"Did they sing the Psalms to any instrument?"—"They would like to, very much; they would have an extraordinary interest in doing so."—"And could none be got?"—"Well, a piano could even have been got for nothing, but these unfortunate dissensions—" Ah! better, far better, my Christian friend in the beautiful garment, to have let the singing boys alone, and left the multitude to sing for themselves! You should know better than I, but I think I have read that they did so, once upon a time, and that "when they had sung an hymn," Some one (not in a beautiful garment) went up unto the Mount of Olives.

It made my heart ache to think of this miserable trifling, in the streets of a city where every stone seemed to call to me, as I walked along, "Turn this way, man, and see what waits to be done!" So I decoyed myself into another train of thought to ease my heart. But, I don't know that I did it, for I was so full of paupers, that it was, after all, only a change to a single pauper, who took possession of my remembrance instead of a thousand.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he had said, in a confidential manner, on another occasion, taking me aside; "but I have seen better days."

"I am very sorry to hear it."

"Sir, I have a complaint to make against the master."

"I have no power here, I assure you. And if I had—"

"But allow me, sir, to mention it, as between yourself and a man who has seen better days, sir. The master and myself are both masons, sir, and I make him the sign continually; but, because I am in this unfortunate position, sir, he won't give me the countersign!"

SEVENTY YEARS' FOX-HUNTING.

THE life of a man with one idea, riding the best horses and keeping close to the hounds over the broad pastures of the "shires,"—this is the task that the "Druid"—so called, it is to be presumed, from his affection for the Oaks (of Epsom)—executed, with a oneness of purpose

and extinction of self truly astonishing, when, note-book and pencil in hand, he sat beside the veteran in a gig and made him

Flourish his whip and show where fields were won.

The theme of "this old man eloquent" may rather jar on the nerves of worthy folks who look upon hunting as an idle and foolish amusement, a waste of time and money, a needless endangering of brains and bones. Walter Scott's friend, the Antiquary, thought that a walk from his library to his garden once a day was enough for any one but a fool or a fox-hunter. But hunting in England is, in modern slang, a great fact, and All the Year Round would never complete its circle without some minutes given to an amusement only less popular than dominoes and dancing in France—an amusement which occupies at least ten thousand souls of high and low degree six days in the week—walking or riding, running, staring, or looking after or about the one hundred and fifty packs of hounds which, from the 1st of November to the last day of April, are occupied in chasing fox or hare. Debate how you will, hunting is an integral part of English life. Hunting phrases are incorporated in the English language. The hunter-horse is specially English, and the Englishman's seat on horseback is neither mediæval, nor military, nor Oriental, but a hunting seat. It was with a hunting seat that Cromwell's Ironsides rode down Rupert's finished Cavaliers, "beat them, broke them, drove all adrift."

Young England may fairly be divided into those who do ride, and those who would ride if they could. For these reasons, our gravest and most devoted pedestrians will perhaps listen, if it be only as a matter of curiosity, to the autobiographical reminiscences of Dick Christian Laban, recorded in "Silk and Scarlet," a book written by The Druid. Dick Christian is the fakir, bonze, dervish, or high-priest of the fox-hunting faith; Dick Christian's memories extending back to 1790, before the French Revolution, before the French Republic and Empire, before Aboukir, Trafalgar, and Waterloo, before Railroads, Steam-Boats, Photographs, Reform Bills, Free Trade, Electric Telegrams, and Universal Exhibitions.

This garrulous and very equestrian gossip we have reduced to order and sequence, thinking that some lives may not be less amusing than the many lives of tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, gentleman, ploughboy, apothecary, thief, which are not the least thumbed volumes of a free library in a great city.

"I was born," says Dick, "in March, '79. Collesmere was my native place." A very appropriate place for such a character, the Collesmere pack being the oldest in England. "Father wanted to have made me a scholar, but I was all for horses, and in room of going to school I always slipped down to Stevenson, Sir Horace Mann's head groom at the Riding-school, and rode the horses till the boys came out, then off I slips home to my dinner

with my books, quite grave. I loved nothing like horses, and when I was only six or seven I used to go out on my ponies bare back, and jump everything, right and left, just like other people. My word, I could sit a good many. I rode to hounds when I was eight years old.

"I was put apprentice to a butcher, Mr. Hubbard they called him. Many's the sheep I've killed. I could skin a head like winking, but I liked going to market best. He had a little blue frock made for me, all trim and nice. But one market day he leaves me at home, and said I should drive the dung-cart." This did not suit Dick's dignity, so after various tricks with the horse and cart, he ran off home. "When Mr. Hubbard comes back, he says, 'Where's my boy?' and then he off after me. He wanted me sadly to come back with him; but I says, 'Sir, your kindness is more than I deserve, but it's no use, my mind is set upon horses.' And so it has been to this day. I would be somewhere about twelve and a half when I went to Sir Horace Mann's racing stables at Barham Down, Kent, and rode my first race there. There wasn't more than four and a half stone of me then. Oh dear, what monkey tricks I was up to. Some mountebanks comes to Canterbury, and the trainer lends me his pony. Coming home, I thought I would do as they did. I jumps on the saddle and there I stands, and gallops by the side of a post-chaise all the way homie, the people inside laughing at me. One of them pitched me a shilling.

"I rode at Margate, and had a bad accident with my knee. It was a two or three years job, so, being lame, I went home; father sent me to school a bit. Then I went down to Timms, the trainer at Nottingham. We galloped the horses in old Sherwood Forest, and took them to water at Beeston water-mill—the spots are covered with factories now. Home again to Collesmere. Blame me, if I didn't ride twenty races in one week in Bushy Park. What a week it was to be sure, pony-racing, hacks, all sorts of fun. Rode a race on a pony against Lord Milington (him as married the Duke of Ancaster's daughter). It was only half a mile: away I jumped, and he never caught me. What a deal they made of me. They carried me into the tent and gave me three glasses of wine and a fine mounted whip. Then Lord Winchelsea made a match with me against Captain Bligh, a first-rate runner and cricketer—me to ride a donkey and he to run afoot half a mile. But, my word, I beat him at last, and they gave me my first gold guinea! Thousands and thousands were there, but I suppose they're all dead now.

"After this 'ere racing concern, Sir Gilbert Heathcote sent his huntsman for me to go over to Normanton Park. Stevenson went with me, and Sir Gilbert and his lady (she was very kind to me, bless her) came out to us. My lady quite laughed. 'That little thing for a riding-groom!' she said; 'he can't sit a horse.' 'Try him, my lady,' said Stevenson (you see he always spoke up for me); 'give him one saddled and one to lead.' Up I gets with the two, and off across

the park. Didn't I take it out of them. Galloped until Sir Gilbert hollers me to stop. 'He'll do,' they said; 'he can hold anything.' I always rode out with the lady in a blue coat and striped waistcoat, and I rode second horse for Sir Gilbert. Mr. Watson, he once said to him, 'You'll kill that boy, riding day after day without stirrups.' Bless you, I could turn a somersault in them days; when I felt the horse going I throwed myself clean over and lighted on my legs—no end of gentlemen saw it."

With this introduction we have a self-painted picture of the mind and manner of the man who, at eighty, was still "light-legged, sturdy, five foot six, broad of chest, and stout of arm," and anxious to ride a steeple-chase against any one within ten years of his own age.

As his peculiar business has been to turn raw colts and race-horses into finished hunters, and to keep up his reputation among his customers, who were the hunting men of three generations, by going straight first if possible, it is not astonishing to find that Dick had lots of accidents. "This here leg broke, two of my ribs—never broke my collar-bone, so precious thick-set they can't get at it. Bless you, I've known horses get out of a ditch, and put their fore legs on each of my shoulders; my coat's been all split up by them! But," says the game veteran, "I see no fear, not even now, and can see a distance just as well as ever, when I'm with hounds." And so we find, when he comes to tell the story of his adventure thirty years ago with the Quorn hounds, when in four successive leaps, the first of nearly nineteen feet, in all fifty-three feet, his horse carried him safe to the bottom of an old quarry, with a sloping side as steep as the roof of a Gothic gable, "for," says our hero, "you see Mr. Coke—what how-dacious men to ride he and Sir James Musgrave were to be sure—told me I must always go if it killed the mare. So this Marigold I sent her at a hedge; when I was in the air I sees my danger. Frightened? God bless you, I was never frightened in my life; so I pulls her right back just as she touched the bank, and shot her hind legs under her. We made three landings of it." These three landings, were, first, a thick-cut hedge, four feet six high, lighting on a bank a yard wide, and then three bounds into the pit, the last bound being nineteen feet nine inches, as carefully measured from the hind legs to the hind leg marks again.

After this we understand him when he exclaims, "Ah! what fun I had with horses in my day! I could fairly live in the air."

With these qualifications, it is not astonishing to find that a noted and fashionable horse-dealer engaged Dick when George the Third was king, and George the Plump, Regent, as tutor to his hunters and his son, "a nice little boy only fourteen, and never an ounce above five stone. Poor little Matty, I killed him. He used to cry sadly. Old Matty would make him follow me. I well-nigh drowned him two or three times; I brought him up just as I wur brought up myself. My orders was to go and catch 'em. And the

little chap was never to leave me. Mat always said he would lick him, if he stopped, but he never did that I heard of; he was a kind-hearted man. Blame, he would get little Matty home after hunting, and nurse him like a woman. Only such a blackguard—always bankrupt; never out of that mess. I mind when George the Third died, he put us both in mourning alike, for he was a loyal sort of fellow with all his coarse talk—new green suits with black buttons."

As to the terms for this tutoring of boy and horse, it seems that Mat was more liberal than the genteel people of delicate language who advertise for governesses. "Five guineas a week; board and lodging; lived as he did; meat and drink, best as was." But the place was no sinecure, for as he drove along he pointed out "the fields where many a thousand times I've been three hours before we went hunting." Two or three tumbles regular before breakfast. We had sometimes nine horses out; rode three half way to cover, three for the other half, and three when we got there, and jumped all the way straight across country. But still we could not get them ready fast enough for the gentlemen."

Dick and little Mat, when hounds were going best pace, must have been a sight to see, for, "at the very howdacious places, poor little fellow, he used to holler out, 'Where are you?' He couldn't spy me for them bullfinches, thick black-thorn hedges; he didn't know if I wur up or down. We never turned the horses' heads, but went bang at everything—lucky if we only got three falls a day. He was so light he used to bound up like a ball."

The process of young Mat's education seems to have been so amusing to Meltonian celebrities of that day, Captain White and Mr. Maxse, that they used to plant themselves in convenient situations, where "one of them regular stitchers" was in the way, to see "Dick and Matty have it." "But," says the tutor, "they served me that way so often, that when I see them, I used to say 'Matty, here's a rum 'un afore us; take fast hold of his head, and don't fear nothing,' for I always put him on those (horses) I knew to be perfect."

The poor child was not doomed to break his neck. Dick, whose heart seems as tender as his muscles are tough, would, had he read Milton the poet, have quoted Death on the Pale Horse, for he concludes with, "Nice little lad! he was quite broke down with consumption, and he only came for a very little bit the next season. A frost came—I went with him as far as Northampton—he said he'd 'never see me no more.' I was grieved just! And he never did."

We can't quite make out whether it was from humility or contempt for our legislators that our veteran, when referring to an occasion on which he particularly delighted the mob by winning a race, says, "They panted to chair me round the town; but I says, 'I'll have none of that: I'm not a Parliament man; it may do well enough for the likes of them. Give me a bite of a apple.'"

Among his portraits is one Heycock, a yeoman farmer, who seems to have been even harder than our octogenarian, for Sir James Musgrave, having a new horse, "Heycock comes up to him out hunting, with 'How d'ye like your new horse, Sir James?' 'Pretty well,' Sir James says, 'only he makes me a little nervous; he hits timber.' 'I'll tell you what to do,' says Heycock; 'take him out by yourself, quite private, and give him two or three heavy falls over timber; I always do it.' There was such a laugh! 'God bless me, Mr. Heycock! you make my hair stand on end.' Them were Sir James's words; and he was precious hard, too, was Sir James."

The greater part of Dick's autobiography is composed of sketches of celebrated runs, and the gentlemen and the horses that figured in them, suggested by scenes through which he was driving. The stiff bullfinches about Ashby Pasture remind him of his particular favourite, Captain White, when "in old times we used to go at these regular stitchers slapbang, hollering like fun, to cheer up horses and men. Captain White was a good 'un at that game—how he would holler to be sure!" And Thrussergen Gorse reminds him of one of the Captain's hollering days, when "Mr. Coke, who was partickler fond of this Marigold mare" (that did the big leap before described), "wanted her to do something to be talked about, so he sent her for me to ride at Six Mills, with orders for me to wait for his directions. Up he comes, and says he, 'I want you to do your best with her. Go into the cover with the hounds, and never leave them.' So in I went; blamed if he wasn't waiting to see me come out—great dry ditch, cut-and-bound fence—Marigold made nothin' of it. 'Now, that's well done,' says he; 'go on, Dick, and keep with the hounds.' It was the beautifullest run of an hour and a half. They viewed him the last mile before they killed him close by the water-mill. I never stopped for gates or nothing, and beat them all clean out. Captain White was about a field behind me, hollering all the way, 'Go along, old fellows Go and ketch him, gentlemen!' for he wa! always for me, and kept hardening me on: I don't think I'd ever have gone at such fences; but he had such a pleasant way with him, I couldn't help going a tickler."

"The gentlemen comes up when we'd killed, and they says, 'Now, Coke, what do you think of it?' He says, quite short, 'It's very satisfactory, I think.' So there was something in it I didn't know of."

We don't know what effect this sketch of Dick's may have on our non-hunting readers, to us it brings up the scene complete. The hounds flying, almost mute from speed, dashing through hedges and flying the gates. Dick racing behind down the rolling, undulating fifty-acre brown pasture fields, holding hard and going straight, and cheering the hounds as he goes; the pleasant captain a field or so behind, cheering Dick and chaffing his fellow swells (they were dandies, not swells, in those days); and a dozen good ones

with him, doing their best to catch the veteran; and then, spread over four or five miles, the ruck at every pace, down to a "trot and creep," through the gaps made by the flyers.

But with all Dick's love of a fast thing, he seems not to be of the mind of the huntsman, who, on a bad scenting day, complained of "them stinking violets," for, coming to a wood, in summer, he cries, "Pretty place, this! Thorpe Russell's looks like a flower-garden now, don't it? How sweet the roses and honey-suckles smell! Take the reins. I must step out and get a bunch for my old woman, she's such a one for flowers." This bit of gallantry, by-the-by, was paid to our Centaur's third wife. He sketches off the leading characteristics of two celebrated sportsmen in a very few words. Assheton Smith, the mighty hunter (who died the other day), said, if a horse refuses, "Throw your heart over, and your horse will follow." He never rode fast at his fences; his moral was, "If a man rides fast at his fences, depend upon it he funks."

Sir Harry Goodrick, who died young, was a different stamp of man. "So quiet with the stockings (stocking-weavers), he had 'em at a word. 'Now, my good fellows, you've quite as good a right to see sport as we have; do get back a little and keep quiet.' And they'd be as quiet as mice while the hounds were drawing cover."

Sir Harry always sent a hare and a brace of pheasants to the foreman, from his Norfolk estate. "They're good ones for fox-hounds, though; that's right enough with them. They can't abide steeple-chases, and stag-hounds, and harriers, and all that sort of thing. I don't wonder at it; many of their farms are just like gardens."

With this sentence we leave the veteran of a hundred, or more likely a thousand, falls, for the consideration of the curious in characters.

WISE SAWS AND MODERN INSTANCES.

I SEE an English timber-yard ten acres in extent. Twelve years ago it was a swampy meadow, and at this time part of it is useless because covered four or five feet deep with sawdust. That is, the dust made about ten years ago by thirty or forty hand-sawyers who then worked upon the spot. It is a strange kind of surface soil; and on its weathered surface there grows only a strange kind of scarlet mushroom, nothing else.

I see my timber-yard at Gloucester in the form of saw and machine joinery works, of which the sheds alone (some of the largest sprang up mushroom fashion in a single day) have absorbed not a few Baltic and American cargoes. Lines of rail form a net over the yard. These I observe to be blockaded with some trucks of timber cut for the Midland Railway at the rate of three thousand superficial feet an hour by saws that are almost six feet in diameter. I go to the shed in which three of these saws are at work, and am struck by the

regularity with which logs of the hugest size, after they have been searched for nail stumps, are seized at the middle by the long-necked cranes and placed upon the pairs of wrought-iron slides, which, when the advance gear is set on, carry them under the three sets of revolving teeth. When a piece of timber has been cut by one of these saws, it is swung round into an adjoining shed, two hundred feet long, where it is, by smaller saws, cut into scantlings. Some of these thin circular tools are so fine that eighty Venetian window-blinds can be stripped out of a space eleven inches wide.

The rapid disappearance of the sawdust puzzles me until I am shown the action of the sweeping machine. Traversing the piling vaulted foundations on toothed wheels, it buckets away to the furnace all that falls. The sawdust was embarrassing before there were built two Manchester boilers, having furnaces able to elaborate steam with the aid of such poor fuel. The sheds used frequently to be surrounded by a thousand tons of all kinds of wood dust, and about half that quantity still lies near the sheds. Packed as it is into shelving layers, a dim-sighted geologist might take it to be a red sandstone quarry. The coal saved daily by the use of sawdust and of refuse timber which is too small for other use, is two and a half tons. Professor Faraday told the proprietors of these mills that he knew no way of making manure out of sawdust. But the question, can it not be compressed into a useful building material, is one perhaps worthy consideration by the scores of men who like to spend their money upon filing declarations in the Patent Offices.

The saw of saws to see here is the vertical-frame saw, which, when fixed complete, costs upwards of five hundred pounds. It sits upon ten tons of solid stone, and it will bite a log of thirty inches wide into a hundred or more boards at a single munch of its great jaws. In these mills there is a compound contrivance which enables this saw to work noiselessly. The ribs and shoulders of the machine are altered by the insertion of spring rollers when deals and planks are to be sawn instead of home logs and foreign baulks.

Delicate saws are the cross-cuts, spinning and toiling ever and ever round and round. They are fixed at the base of a depending frame, which is brought forward by a handle when a rectangular cut is wanted, and, when released into the back catch again, still they continue spinning. A fenced contrivance flanks some of these saws whereby timber may be bevelled to any angle. I see a saw of this sort ripping out the V-shaped pieces for the ridges of the rifle corps huts with the patent wave-jointed boarding. The next circular, not less than an inch thick, is at work upon a continuous boxing and cover for underground wires of the telegraph.

Supported by an iron column, close to a wood-boaring machine, I see two saws used by the men in rivalry for cutting out circular sweeps and fancy scrolls. One works from an eccentric shaft, and the first invention by which curved

work could be cut by machinery is technically called an improved jigger. Though making a din equal to the falling down of a slate-covered shed, this instrument is guided by a beardless youth. Many a thousand barrows cut by this machine are now in the gold diggings of Australia. The other is a noiseless saw, and of the sort which Frenchmen have the merit of originating, being an endless riband saw running outside two wood-padded wheels. It is chiefly available for cutting out the circular work of doors and windows, staircase wreaths, and material for the shipwright and wheelwright. Between the two saws there is no shape in mathematics that cannot be traversed and cut out.

I see planing machines. The first I pass is hurling out a storm of dull coloured heavy flakes. An attendant stops the machine to show how the planing ways are divided into alternate systems of top cutters, each one deepening the work of the other, and helped underneath by bottom cutters, all screwed firmly in revolving boxes. A series of side teeth, whirling away like high-mettled clockwork, work at the same time upon the flanks.

The object now under the rollers is a piece of oak twenty feet long, twelve inches wide, and four inches thick, for the caisson of a water-works. I pass the machine again after an hour's interval, and the lad's or donkey engines are engaged in dragging from its teeth shavings from five to six feet long and a foot wide, upon which the red, yellow, and white veins of the pine timber are beautifully visible,—they are like silk ribbons which only nature could vein after that fashion, and to imitate which would puzzle all the Gobelins tapisseries of the Rue Mouffetard in Paris.

The wheel of Fortune hazard-board at a country fair, with its index like a mariner's needle, may suggest the form of the American thickening or planing machine when at rest. I can fancy that I see, in the machine at work, one of these wheels magnified immensely, whistling round and round, with the underside of the game uppermost and the sharp ends of the needle bent down for remorseless chipping away at uneven parts of the self-feeding timber—chipping, too, at a rate which makes the very shavings for a while invisible.

The third planing machine, more complex than the others, resembled a huge piece of iron filigree. It is used chiefly for striking mouldings out of soft pinewoods. A shark's-toothed contrivance is upon its feeding rollers to help the rough timbers on. I see two smaller tearaways, two morticing machines, and a tennoning tool. I see also the embryo of a machine which is intended to make ledge doors by a cheap process. As the plan is similar, I have it now explained to me how the frameworks of the three thousand Crimean huts were made here so expeditiously in the years '55 and '56 by machines which, for the present, are laid up in ordinary. In the first set of one thousand three hundred huts made at these works, there were three hundred and

thirty miles of three-inch joists, six hundred and seventy miles of cover boards, and nine thousand five hundred cubic feet of timber. Thanks to machinery, the work was got through in the four weeks specified. Like contrivances helped to fulfil a contract with the Emperor of the French, who sent hither a company of soldiers, with lieutenant and colonel, to practise the erection of their huts upon the quickest plan. I am shown also the contrivances by which many thousands of doors and windows were made for the hospitals in Renkioi and other places. I see also photographs of the foreign contracts made here in one of the offices, and it seems that the chief timber merchants in this city pride themselves in these works, and whether for Spanish railways, Wallachian stations, or Indian telegraph houses, if the word is given to produce production follows. I am shown also the shed under which a wooden mansion, costing nearly three thousand five hundred pounds, was built, and sent in parts, lettered and numbered, to New South Wales, during a mania for speculation, which caused a monthly despatch from these yards of not fewer than a thousand doors and windows for the Yarra-Yarra.

Evening closes before I have done seeing the saws.

Stumbling over the limbs of a steam frictional pile engine which did duty at the launch of the Great Eastern for the Messrs. Tredwell, I look for the last time on the three main sheds. In the first of them forty thousand tons of timber are cut up in a year, entering as log and coming out veneer. Into the second, timber enters square to come out with as many moulded sides as there are forms in the kaleidoscope. Into the third, a rough scantling of timber enters to come out a door, a window, a staircase, a wardrobe, or, in fact, almost anything that can be made of wood.

TURKISH BURIAL-GROUNDS.

IF I were to go to-morrow and stand tiptoe on the sharp horns of the great golden crescent that caps the dome of St. Sophia, and if, being in that painful and acrobatic position, I had nerve enough to look round me, I should see, stretching on every side of Constantine's great city, a black belt of cypresses girdling the town, like some vast funeral procession, such as would befit the dissolution of an imperial dynasty or the downfall of a nation, a race, or a religion. It scarcely matters whether the sky be golden or crimson, for the trees never cease their sentinel watch and ward, and Stamboul, the Sultan's city, is kept permanently in blockade by them. But for the gorgeous sunshine, and the perpetual smile of sky and sea, they would succeed in giving an undertaker gloom to the whole place, and would, in the traveller's gayest moments, strike thoughts of shrouded and confined Turk, into the most laughing heart.

There is no escaping the sight of those dull, grim trees, which seem like so many horrible repe-

titions of the warning word "Death," written with black ink and in some ancient upright Arabic character, all over the map of Constantinople. I grope up the Seraski Tower, where the fire watchmen stare out of the windows night and day; still I see everywhere those circumvining cypresses, those steadfast friends of death, the great nursery gardener who is always busy sowing seed in his silent garden. There they are, miles of them, besieging the city walls from the Sea of Marmora and the Seven Towers, right away to the Blachernæ Palace and the Golden Horn; but on the Sea of Marmora side, the old ramparts come down too close to the green water to allow of graves, and next them come the Seraglio Gardens; while the warehouses and the littering shops, and the Greek and Jew quarters, press too closely on the third side of the triangle, and verge so crowdingly to the shore, that in that direction there remains no burying-place but the Golden Horn itself and its waves.

To explain the city in a true geographical manner, let me illustrate its shape by a simile. It is like one of those sippets of bread that garnish hashed mutton. The sharp point, the beak, or nose, or promontory, is where the Sultan's old disused palace and gardens stand; the left-hand side is the long line of wall washed by the Sea of Marmora; the base of the triangle is the triple girdle of rampart (miles long) with the Seven Towers at the one end, and the Blachernæ Palace at the Golden Horn extremity; and on this right-hand border of the sippet flows the Horn itself, where the bridge of boats joins Stamboul to the Frank quarter of Galata. Opposite the sharp end of the sippet, you must imagine Scutari sloping up from the blue water's edge, with its thousands of cypresses rearing their black lances; for the Turk has a special love for the Asian land, and will always be buried in Asia if he can afford it.

And now the spider critic, the man who reads to discover faults, and runs mad on his logical ladder if there is but a letter turned upside down by the printer, thinks he has me, and wonders how a four-sided city, or a three-sided city—"if Stamboul is, as the gentleman says, a triangle"—can be said to be surrounded with cypresses and burial-grounds.

Stamboul, I repeat, is a city of live men, walled in by dead men. It is true that the old city of the Greeks has but one long side closely hemmed in with the blockading cypresses, but get tiptoe on the aforesaid airy crescent, and you will see them reaching in rank and file, a funeral army, everywhere all around, to the very dip of the horizon. Over in Galata, across the water, I see them, dark and close on the Grand Champs and the Petit Champ, at Easter-time, when the Greeks have their noisy musket-firing holiday—places of drunken revel and tumult. I see them low down on the hill, and also high up close to where Mahmoud, Abdul Medjid's father, used to practise archery with his Circassian favourite. I see dark patches of terebinth-tree, and plane, too, where the dervishes bury their madmen, and where the Armenians rest

from cheating. I see the same dreary, one-idea'd trees, one hundred thousand strong, drawn up, even three miles away yonder, on the slopes of Scutari, where they appear like regiments of gravediggers, waiting, as vultures wait, for the great Armageddon that is to clear the once Christian city from the unimprovable Turk. There were great burials when they came here first, they say; there may well be sexton festivals when they depart; great wrongs must have great expiations, and the Archangel's sword, from all I can see, is already ground sharp, ready for the red harvest of turbaned believers in a lying creed.

It was a Moslem custom, in the days of purer faith and more ardent zeal for Mohammed, for Turkish parents to plant a cypress-tree on the day a child was given them; and again, on the day of death, the children of the dead man planted another tree on the head of his grave. It was a custom not without poetry, and it accounts for the great cypress forests that girdle the Sick Man's city. It must have been an improving occupation for serious moments, to have gone to look at one's birthday-tree and to have marked its green spire rising, rising, and its husky rind swelling, swelling, reminding the Turk of Time's flight, and of the summers that form our lives, which Time plucks one by one, as an idler does the red leaves of a rose he has grown tired of; it would grow and become a home for doves and a stiff harpstring for the breezes of the Bosphorus; and it would grow gold and ruby in daily sunsets, and a silver column like a frozen fountain in nightly moonshine; and then, when the birthday-tree had distanced its human rival in the life race, and grey hairs and infirm limbs had come to the old man, there would be the cypress, still green, fresh, and unscarred, contemptuously waiting till the grave should open, and that other tree, its young companion so long waited for, should come to rise beside it, perhaps to outlive its predecessor, and triumph in its turn over death and decay. No burial or birth trees are now planted round Stamboul, but the forests reproduce themselves, and they spread and widen, as Turkish conquest once spread and widened, and as some day, perhaps, Christianity will spread and widen over the Mohammedanism which, since 1453, has kept it under its Tartar foot. I never entered those solemn cypress woods around Constantinople without thinking how curiously they resembled those dark forests where, centuries ago, Ptolemy tells us, the nameless and despised Turkish ancestors of the conquerors who slept beneath my feet, dwelt, when they were mere half-naked robber hunters who hid themselves in woods round the Sea of Azof.

How often, in the hot hush of the day, sheltered here by the very shadow of death, have I sat under a turbaned head-stone, listening to the motherly cooing of the doves, hoping that some old Arab magician would come, and, sitting down beside me, suddenly snatch a serpent gliding through the crocus flowers, turn it into

an enchanter's rod, and, waving it over the burial-ground of Scutari, bid the vast army of dead arise and defile before us.

Then should I have selected a class of the turbaned dead, and examined them in Turkish history—because, when I get imbecile and shaky, and incapable of invention, I intend to turn historian. There, out of that million or so of white faces, I should have met men who had driven the fifty pair of sluggish oxen that had dragged the great cannon of the conqueror Mohammed; men who had headed the twelve thousand Janissaries who poured through the Seraglio gardens, and forced Mohammed's heir, Bajazet, to surrender the throne to his fierce brother, Selim, the conqueror of Egypt. This first class dismissed, I should then have selected from that great sea of staring faces, rude soldiers in whose arms Soliman the Magnificent had died in his tent before a besieged Hungarian fortress, and galley-slaves who had pulled with gory hands at the Turkish vessels flying from Lepanto to bear the news to Selim the Second. Nor would I here have been satisfied; for that snake-rod should wave inexorably till I had heard truly how Amurath warred in Poland, and Mahmoud in Hungary; how Achmet signed an inglorious peace; how Mustapha was deposed, and Osman murdered.

Class after class I would have called up, hearing in that place of graves "strange stories of the death of kings," and all the phases of a dynasty which, as I have heard the Greeks say, "came in with the sword and will go out with the knife." I should have insisted on knowing why Amurath the drunken, tormented Persia so, and why Ibrahim was bow-strung? Whether Sobieski defeating Mohammed the Fourth's army really saved Christendom, or Prince Eugene's great victory on the Theiss in 1697?

Nor would I have dismissed, indeed, that great yawning multitude to their dry clay beds before I had severely cross-examined them. I should ask if that hot madman Charles the Twelfth really tore the silk robe of Achmet the Third's vizier, because he would declare peace with Peter the Great; why (I should insist on clear answers), why Mahmoud made peace with Austria at Belgrade; and why Mustapha the Third allowed Russia to conquer the Crimea so easily; and no, not if they grew ever so impatient, would I let the last men sneak back to their narrow homes before I heard whether Selim the Third was much beaten by the Austrians at Belgrade in 1790; and lastly, whether the twenty thousand Janissaries put to death by Mahmoud, the father of the present Sultan (hundreds of them are here resting under their defaced tombs), deserved their fate or not—because Admiral Slade tells me they were the defenders of Turkish liberties, and my other friend, Herne Bey, says they were rebels, and murderers, and robbers to a man. Which am I to believe?

But now, dismissing my turbaned spectres to their narrow beds under the dark trees that know no spring, let me describe, both by

showing what it is like and what it is not, the great Scutari resting-place of the bulk of the Turkish nation. But first, let everybody dismiss all thoughts of the "God's acre" of the English country church. There is no funeral yew-tree here, with dotted red pulpy berries, like a hearse plume sprinkled with blood; there is no mossy tracery round old Gothic windows that are gold-plated with the sun, or silver-frosted with the moon; there is no old stone nest of a tower for dead monks' bells; there are no mouldy chapels, with smell of grave about them, where alabaster knights lie recumbent with ever clasped hands,

As for past sins they would atone,
By saying *endless* prayers in stone.

There are no green rank growths of grass between the turfen mounds where the village boys play. All here is wide and national; no man can say "I will lie among my kindred." The Turk has no quiet, peaceful contemplations about the grave; to him it is a place of terrible purgation, a prison, a spot of horror and fear after life's fitful fever.

The Turk—not from the Koran, but from one of those doubtful traditions of the Prophet which are so numerous and so rabbinical—believes that when Mustapha, his father, or Hassan, his son, is dying, Azrael, the terrible angel of death, approaches the man's bed with his sword drawn. At the point of this blade are three drops of gall, which the dying man swallows: the first turns him pale: the second kills him, and with the third decomposition begins. Death, who with us is a skeleton, clattering like castanets as he moves, and leading off, now the old man, now the child, is, with the vague and more imaginative Turks, a cloudy-winged gigantic angel, striking with his sword, now the sultan on his throne, now the serf at the plough.

Not but that the loving mother or wife, in Turkey, as in England, is often to be seen weeping over the grave; but I mean to say that, while the English woman sees angels hovering round her as she mourns, ministering to her with words of compassion, soothing, and hope, the Turkish woman is visited by spectres, which her mind, burrowing like "the demon mole," sees struggling under the very grave she watches.

The Turkish tradition runs thus—and it is best understood by remembering the papal legends of purgatory, which are also of undoubted pagan origin: The mullahs (priests) say that when the dead Turk is laid in the grave, hooped over loosely with boards, jammed in and embedded lightly with the dry dusty earth of the Scutari cypress grounds, as soon as his pale eyes have struggled open and got accustomed to that boiling darkness, an angel appears to him, and bids him sit up to be examined as to his faith; the dead man sits up, trembling; instantly the two examining angels, black and livid monsters, called Monker and Nakir, carrying huge iron maces such as the pre-Adamite kings wielded, or such as the Ginns war with, appear, the one

at his feet, and the other at his head. In a searching voice they demand the dead Mussulman's opinions as to the unity of God, the mission of Mohammed, and the truth of the Koran.

If the dead man answer well, the black angels depart, and he falls into a balmy sleep, fanned by the breath of paradise; but, if he have infidel or Jewish tenets, those angels beat him on the temples with their maces till his cries are heard all through the world and by all creatures save the accursed genii; and his great sins changing into dragons with seven heads, and snakes, and his peccadilloes into scorpions, he is thrown among them, and is stung, and bitten, and tortured until the resurrection.

Need I say that some of these undertaker legends—easy to believe as they appear—have sceptics who reject them? Indeed, there are many opinions in Turkey among the religious and the learned as to the abiding-place of the soul, after the body, its house, has gone to ruins. Some say that it remains lingering near the grave of its lost companion—a supposition which even in Europe has originated countless ghost stories. Others, not unadvisedly, say that the souls of Mohammedan martyrs become green birds in the gardens of heaven; that others rest in the fountains of Eden; that the souls of the rest of the good are placed in the trumpet of the Archangel; that the bad remaining prisoners lie under the Devil's lower jaw. About all these things which pass the sense, the Koran readers have doubts; but they all agree that one obscure and dishonoured bone of the human anatomy—the os coccygis—is alone indestructible, and that from it, at the last day, after two months of heavy rain, will sprout up the body, the germ of which is in that bone, as the flower is in the seed.

It is, therefore, for the kind purpose of letting the dead man sit up and pass his examination that the Turk is buried without a coffin, and that is why his grave so often cracks, gapes, and falls in: much to the horror of all but undertakers, and much to the comfort and convenience of the wild dogs. To shorten the period of suspense before the examination (when the soul is said to be in pain), is why the Turks, usually so grave and slow, run at a funeral; and why, as if drunk with joy, they rush down steep and stony streets with their burden, dreading all the time lest poor Mustapha may have to eat of the tree Zaccoum, whose roots fill hell, whose fruit resembles the head of devils, and on which the lost are to feed, with a drink of boiling and sulphurous water.

Another cause of the Turkish grave falling in, is the custom of leaving a hole in the earth extending from where the corpse lies, to the surface a dangerous practice, giving the dead a weapon with which to kill the living, and bring them to their own condition. This hole is said to be left in case the dead man wish to make any communication, but I believe the truth to be, that it is a remembrance of the old custom of the Greeks

and Romans (and probably the men of the Lower Empire), of leaving a hole in the upper floor of some of their double-roofed tombs to pour down libations of honey, milk, and wine, as offerings to the dead man's manes. It was these manes that Christianity invested in semi-Pagan times with demoniac life and power, and turned into ghosts. It is to remove the danger of such breathing places of pestilence—more terrible than even London pews built over festering vaults—that the cypresses were planted originally in Mohammedan burial-grounds: the aromatic odour of those resinous mournful trees being thought to neutralise all exhalations. But the shrewd infidel has taken wiser means than this, of avoiding pestilence; he does not line his thickly-peopled streets with dead bodies, nor does he fill up the chinks between his close-packed buildings with corpses; he takes his dead far away outside his walled city, across the Bosphorus, or to treed slopes high above the sea—to wide tracts outside the ramparts—or to the sides of hills, looking down upon the breezy harbour.

In every rite connected with the dead, the Turk differs from the Englishman. He refrains as far as possible from burying near a great city. Dead Ali does not crawl to the grave with hypocritical hirelings, but friends bear him on their shoulders, quick and cheerfully; partly, because they think the dead man's soul is suffering until it undergo its examination; partly, because the Koran says that a man carrying the corpse of a true believer, even forty paces, obtains the expiation of several sins. The Turks do not burn coffins, so as to make room where there is no room, but they never bury twice in the same place, if they have any proof of previous interment. Severe predestinarians, they never lament a death. They do not call it a loss, or a misfortune, or become inconsolable, or faint and talk of the "dear departed," or write flowery epitaphs on rogues and money-lenders, but they say it was ordained, it was God's will, and therefore must be right; and all they do is to sing verses of the Koran, and heap blessings on the head of the chief mourner.

They bury the dead at the hour of prayer, either at noon or sunset. The body is then brought to the mosque, and followed by the congregation, or part of it, to the grave. Friday, the Moslem Sunday, is the women's day of mourning. Then, you see veiled mourners, faceless as Banshees, bowing and rocking over the earthen mounds, watching the jasmine flower or the rose, with its "paradise of leaves" set in the little chiselled-out sancers on the tombstones, that are scooped for that special purpose. Just after the muezzin has chanted out his summons to prayer from the high balcony of the minaret, I have met the lively funerals at these appointed times, but I never dared to follow the Moslem to his last resting-place, because it would have polluted a true believer's grave. How can I, who have been in various countries treated thus intolerantly, ever myself be again intolerant?

But let me get to my actualities. What sort of a place is this great burial-ground of Scu-

tari, with its nation of dead, its owl and dove-haunted cypresses? First, let us slide down the steep street that runs from Misseri's to Tophana, the Arsenal-gate, and take boat. I am in the caique's cradle, I cross my legs, and am jerked across the Bosphorus. I leap on shore. I am in Scutari, just under Miss Nightingale's Hospital, and the English burial-ground, whose tombs range along the sea-cliff. I throw some great copper pieces on the caique cushions, and the boatman lets them lie there as contemptuously as the cabman regarded the shilling I yesterday left for him on my door-step. I scale the steep street of Scutari, buy a great hatful of sticky grapes, and find at the door of the fruit-stall, which the soldiers of the opposite hospital (now cavalry barracks) much patronise, some Turks sitting cross-legged, dozing in the shade of a plane-tree. They are enjoying the Turk's highest pleasure since opium-eating has grown obsolete. They sit with the mind asleep, but the body and eyes open; this is what they call "taking kef," and they do it when we should be cricketing, partridge-shooting, riding, or boating. It is the miserable resource of a worn-out race. If they were driven back to get their bread by tilling the desert paradises of Asia Minor, these Turks might find less time for "taking kef," and more for honest work. I strike high up to the right, passing sleepy country-houses; generally painted a dull Indian red, with windows projecting and shut in with unpainted wooden lattices, close as canary cages. I reach the skirt of the cypress woods through an up-and-down bare parade seamed with cracks in the earth; all this was once burial-ground too, says tradition.

I shun a blue-coated, stunted Turkish regiment on drill, just approaching, with yellow flags and undulating bayonets, and I pierce in between the cypresses, many of whose husky and flaking stems are of gigantic size, and unspannable by my arms. I see no owls, though I am told that at night they fill these Acherontic woods with demon hooting, such as you may have heard in the Incantation scene in *Der Freischütz*, when *Zamiel* appears.

I find myself in a great region of death, sown thick with sloping tombstones, every third one crowned with a stone turban. There are literally hundreds of thousands of them, in all stages of gentle decay. They look as if death had, as a ghastly joke, turned the place into a skittle-ground for quiet moonlight evenings; a game seems over, and the pins are not yet rearranged, but remain tumbled about in dire confusion—miles of tombstones, which are shot about at all angles like so many crystals, like so many white pages plucked by *Azrael* from the great book of life, each with its square or round turban, or its red painted fez and blue tassel, its ledger lines of blue and gilt letters and Koran verses, around us, everywhere, rise the black spires of

the cypresses, which receive the sun as the dusty surface of a pall does.

An outlaw might remain hidden among these tombs, and be seen by nobody for days; but still there are great roads bisecting the burial-ground—wide, dusty, silent tracts, with loose tombstones paving them—fractured stone turbans rolling about their banks like gathered fruit. Here and there, even, at the edges, you come to a coffeshed, a Turk digging a grave solemnly, a dervish praying and swaying and telling his beads over a tomb, or a black slave rides past, dead asleep on a donkey, or some soldiers lounge through and talk to the people on their way to market. Otherwise, all is death, though you are here but half an hour from the heart of Stamboul.

But, burying in the city is not quite so rare as some writers, partisans of the Turks merely because they dislike the wily and dangerous Russians, have declared. In dozens of quiet Stamboul streets you suddenly find the shops fading out, and a yellow dead wall taking their place, pierced with gratings, through which are visible blue and gilt tombstones shaded by plane-trees. Entering, you find the tombs littered up with rags and old boxes, and turned into dunghills, as bad as anything your London churchwarden can show, or hide. Then there are the mortuary chapels of the sultans, which I shall refer to again, where you are shown the royal coffins covered with gorgeous Persian shawls, and decorated with royal turbans, on which the agraffes of diamonds still glitter starrily.

At Galata, too, half up that dreadful hill to Misseri's, on the right hand side, is a dervishes' burial-ground, where planes grow green and the tombs display their inscribed tablets warningly to your eyes.

But the greatest place of interment, next to that at Scutari, is the long range of ground that follows the triple ramparts from the Seven Towers which look out on the Propontis to the Palace of Blachernæ, which commands the Golden Horn. It begins with vast levels of kitchen garden, gradually giving way to turbaned tombs, which border the carriage-road, as the graves do the Pompeian road and the Appian Way. There, where knots of young Greeks wrestle, and run the gauntlet, and dance in rings, flows the white river of tombs, out by the Janissary barracks, and on the road to the Greek mad-houses, and down to where the street slopes to Eyub (*Job*), that brave adherent of the Arab Prophet, whose grave still makes the potters' suburb of Stamboul a holy place.

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